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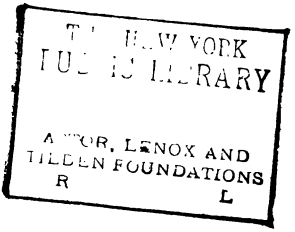
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On and on flew the tandem.—*Page 56.*

MY FRIEND JIM

A STORY OF REAL BOYS
AND FOR THEM

BY

MARTHA JAMES, pseud. of

Doyle, Martha Claire (MacGowan).

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK T. MERRILL

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MY FRIEND JIM.

CHAPTER I.

AT SUNNYSIDE FARM.

"I KNOW I'm going to like this place," said Brandt, drumming on the window.

"I am sure you will, dear," replied Mrs. Cole, who was standing beside the pale boy. "The grass is as green as if it were June," she continued; "it is very warm for April."

"I think I'll go out awhile;" and so saying, the boy left the room. He waved his hand to the pleasant face at the window, as he walked across the broad stretch of meadow land.

It was Brandt's second day at Sunnyside Farm, and he decided to look over his new surroundings. After walking quite a

distance, he grew tired and sat on a stone under a slender maple tree to rest.

All at once he heard the sweetest warbling behind some bushes near him. It sounded as if several birds were holding forth in one grand concert. He turned to look, as did also a little brown bird over his head, when to his surprise he beheld a boy about his own age and a small black dog.

The whistling lad stopped suddenly when he saw Brandt; but the latter said eagerly, "Won't you please do it again?"

"Yes; if you like it," was the ready answer, and immediately he gave one long, shrill whistle, broken here and there by little trills; then came a low warble that rose higher and higher until it ended in a mournful shriek.

Suddenly it was the soft cooing of doves, so perfect that one would think they were fluttering over the lad's head; and again a bob-o'-link call, that gurgled and rippled and trilled, prolonged for a minute loud and clear, then growing fainter and fainter until it died away in one wee note.

"Thank you," said the listener, who had remained almost spell-bound during the performance. "Who taught you to do it so beautifully?"

"Nobody taught me," was the answer; "I just listened to the birds."

It seemed as if the brown bird overhead would burst his little throat in his efforts to be heard, but the boys were not listening to him. They regarded each other in boy fashion for a minute, and then one of them said, "I live in the white house on the hill; my name is Brandt — Brandt Carter."

"Mine's Jim," returned the other; "and this is my dog Tim."

Tim wagged his tail in his very best manner by way of introduction, while his master remarked, "If you live up there, you must be the boy that's sick."

"Oh, no," replied Brandt, quickly. "I'm not sick now, you know; I have been quite ill, though, — that is why we came to the country, — but I'm better."

"I live over there," said Jim, pointing to a brown cottage a short distance away. "I heard my mother talking about you."

"I haven't any mother," said the other, slowly. "My dear mamma died when I was born, but," he added proudly, "I have a great big papa."

"So have I," answered Jim; "he's the gardener, and he can do everything."

"My papa can do ever so many things, too," said Brandt, "but he isn't in this country now; he's far away, across the ocean in London."

Jim was very much interested to hear about Brandt's father living in a city so far off, and listened with a great deal of attention while the boy told him about it.

"I'll let you read some of my papa's letters some day," said Brandt, "if you would like to."

"Thanks," replied Jim, "it would be very nice." Suddenly his face lit up, and he said quickly, "If you come with me, I'll show you my tool chest."

The boy who had been sitting on the stone all the while arose and stood beside his companion. The contrast between them was indeed striking. One was pale skinned and delicate looking. The face was bright

and winning, but too thoughtful for one so young. Perhaps it was the great dark eyes that made it look so, or perhaps the signs of recent illness. Jim was the picture of a healthy country boy, with sturdy limbs and a rosy freckled face. He was a year younger than Brandt, but was taller than his companion by several inches.

They walked across the field, Tim barking at their heels, and talked over the delights of a boy's tool chest.

This was the beginning of their friendship, and a great many happy days followed — days in which the country boy showed Brandt all his treasures.

Jim knew where the fishing was good, and where he had a fine raft which he himself had made. He knew where there were robin's eggs that his good mother had told him not to molest.

It was too early then, but he promised to take Brandt to a certain spot where luscious strawberries grew, and showed him the long, thorny vines where blackberries would ripen in the sun, by and by.

Jim had promised to go up to the great

house and see some of Brandt's treasures, but when he went one afternoon he found that they were mostly books.

"I don't care much for books," he said.

"But they are full of beautiful stories about people and places," exclaimed Brandt.

"I'd rather have my tool chest than all the books in the world," retorted Jim.

"But don't you like to read books?" asked Brandt, whose chief delight was a good story.

"I've never read much," said Jim, "'cept my reading book."

"Oh, I never liked my reading book," returned Brandt, "but story books are different.

"Perhaps I'll let you take some of my books to read," said Brandt, but his companion exclaimed quickly, "Thanks, but I'd rather go for a tramp in the woods; now honest, wouldn't you?"

"No," replied Brandt, disappointed because Jim did not care for his beautiful books. "It makes me very tired to go far, and I'd rather have a good story any time."

Then a new thought came to Brandt, and he said quickly, "I'll tell you what I'll do; suppose I tell you a story that I've read, and see how you like it."

The two boys sat side by side, and Brandt began with, "Once upon a time" (that dearest of all beginnings to the youthful mind), telling the story in simple boy language.

Jim, who had been listening at first with indifference, became interested as the story progressed, and at last very much excited.

"Is that all?" he asked eagerly, when the story was finished.

"That's all," answered Brandt, much pleased in the interest in one of his favorite tales.

Jim was silent a moment, and the little story teller said, "Do you like it?"

"It's splendid!" was the answer. "I didn't think they had such good stories in books; is it truly just like that?"

"It's a great deal better in the books," said Brandt, "because you seem to do it all yourself, you know."

"I never thought I'd like books," ob-

served Jim; "but if they are all as nice as your story, I'm going to read some."

But the sun was shining and the birds singing, and Jim's active legs were ready for a run over the fields, so he coaxed his companion to come out, and they started for the woods.

When Brandt got tired they stretched on the warm grass and looked at the blue sky. Suddenly the thoughtful boy said, "Wouldn't it be nice, Jim, if we could fly right up there?"

"I never thought of it before, but it would be great fun.

"Just think," he added, "if I could make wings with my tools, and we could put 'em on."

"Ye-es," replied Brandt, rather reluctantly. "I don't think you could make them, you know. They'd grow on your back like the birds'."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Jim, taking a long blade of grass and biting the end.

"I'll tell you what would be fine," exclaimed Brandt, "to have the magic carpet!"

"What's that?" asked the other, pulling up a whole bunch of grasses and rolling it into a tiny ball.

Brandt, lying quietly on his back, his small hands under his head, told the story of the wonderful carpet, and when he had finished, Jim said: —

"Good! I like your stories first-rate."

Then they talked about it for quite a long time. At last Jim said, "Say, Brandt, do you know any stories about soldiers?"

"Just a few," was the answer; "but I love to hear about them, don't you?"

"Yes," answered Jim, "I like soldiers; they're so brave, you know."

"My cousin Dick's a soldier," said Brandt. "He lives in New York; and I mean to be one when I grow up."

"I'd like to be a soldier, too," replied Jim; "and after the battle was over I'd come marching home, and then I'd just build houses and things all the time."

"I don't think I'll go any farther to-day," said Brandt, rising. "Perhaps we had better turn back."

"I'm ready," answered his companion,

trying to stand on his head and take a back somersault.

When they reached the house, Brandt stood on the broad piazza and watched his new friend saunter across the pleasant fields, whistling like a bird as he went.

The boys were good friends with Pete, who took care of the horses, and there was hardly a day that they did not pay him a visit.

Pete was a privileged character in the Carter household. He had shown great bravery during a fire some years previous, and had saved some valuable papers for Brandt's father.

When Mr. Carter offered the brave fellow another position, Pete touched his cap and said, "Thank yer, sir, thank yer, but hif it's all the same ter you, sir, I prefer the 'osses, sir."

He was short and thick-set, with very broad shoulders and an honest, good-natured face. "I like Pete," said Brandt, when he was only a little fellow, "'cause there's little twinkles coming out of his eyes."

Pete told the boys a great deal about horses, and sometimes let them take a ride. Dandy was a beautiful chestnut-colored horse, and Sport was a dapple gray. The handsome horses held up their heads and stepped off proudly whenever the boys got on their backs.

"Ain't she a beauty!" cried Pete, one day, stroking Dandy's back, when he had lifted Brandt off.

"She's a fine horse," replied Brandt, with the air of a gentleman well acquainted with horse-flesh.

"She won't be, bime by, though," said Pete, shaking his head.

"Why?" asked both boys at once.

"'Cause the 'osses' tails must be docked," answered Pete, grimly. "Cut hoff."

"Are you going to do it?" asked Brandt, eagerly.

"Them's my horders; I'm to 'ave it done very soon."

Pete looked very sober, and spoke in such sorrowful tones that both boys were silent.

After a pause he continued: "Yer aunt

wanted *me* ter, but I cawn't do it. She said as 'ow it was all right an' proper, an' that all the smart 'osses were treated so, but I told 'er as 'ow I couldn't do it, sir. I said, 'that 'andsome tail wot God put there fer reasons plain ter every one,' an' I said as 'ow it was a shame ter cut it hoff an' mutilate a noble hanimal. I pinted 'er hout, sir, the poor critters in the city with their little stumps sticking hup, an' nothin' ter brush hoff the bitin' flies in summer.

"Yes, sir," continued Pete, warming up, "an' I heven said, 'tain't the gentle folks wot does it, 'cause they know better an' are merciful; it's wulgar, that's wot it is.' I said as 'ow I couldn't do it an' look a noble 'oss in the face, like Dandy — well, sir, it ain't done yet, but it's comin', I'm afraid."

"Why," said Brandt, standing very straight, "I never thought about it, but I feel just as you do. Auntie's gone away for a month; but I'll write to my papa at once and ask him not to have it done." And he straightway went to the house and wrote such an appealing letter,

that when papa read it in London one morning, he smiled through the tears that would come at times, when he thought of his motherless boy.

One day, not long after, Brandt got a nice long letter from his father, which said, among other things, that the horses' tails would not be cut off. When he read it, he ran out to meet Jim, waving the letter over his head, and together the boys went to the stable to tell Pete.

Brandt held the letter behind his back and said to the friend of the horses, "Got some good news, Pete; I'll give you three guesses."

"Yer cousin Dick's at the 'ouse," replied Pete, grinning.

"No sir-ee," said the boy with the letter.

"Yer got a letter from yer pa."

"Right you are," cried Brandt. "Just read it; it concerns you."

Pete took the letter, and when he had read it, he threw up his cap and cried, "'urrah," then he put his hands on his sides and began such a funny dance in and out on his heels and toes, that the boys laughed

and clapped their hands. They had an extra long ride that day, and everybody looked happy. Even the horses had a very knowing look on their faces. It seemed as if they knew all about it.

CHAPTER II.

A QUARREL.

THE next day it rained very hard, and Brandt invited Jim to come and play with him in the house. Jim took his tool chest and went to the great room that was filled with all kinds of beautiful toys.

Mrs. Cole peeped in at the door, and saw Brandt showing his different toys and explaining. "This is my horse, Bucephalus," said he, introducing a great horse on wheels with a real saddle. "I used to ride it when I was little, but now that I'm a big boy, papa says I'm going to ride a real horse when I'm stronger. Bucephalus is really a very good horse, though," continued the boy.

"He's fine!" said Jim, with enthusiasm, and with Brandt's help he mounted the fiery steed and held in the reins, saying, "Get up!"

Mrs. Cole stepped softly away, a smile on her wholesome countenance. "He is improving," she said to herself; "he looks ever so much better."

Brandt showed all his games to his little friend, but he happened to remember the very newest one that his father had sent him from London. It was in his room, and he left Jim a moment to get it.

Now it so happened that while he was gone Jim caught sight of a small shelf that was hanging from one side.

"It only needs a nail or two," said practical Jim, "to make it good and straight." He at once opened his little tool chest, and taking a hammer and some nails, proceeded to fix the shelf.

But he was not quite tall enough to reach it, so he looked around for something to stand on. He tried a chair, but that was too high. Just then he caught sight of some books. "The very thing," said Jim.

He took a large, beautiful book, and by placing two others on top of it, found that he could reach the shelf nicely.

He was just in the act of putting in the

second nail when the door opened, and Brandt entered. He stood perfectly still, looking at Jim, while on the small, pale face a dark flush appeared.

Jim turned to discover what made him so quiet, and seeing the angry look stepped hastily off the books. But alas! in his hurry his foot slipped.

One of the books fell to the floor opened, and Jim put his heel through the middle of a page, making a very dirty mark.

"How dare you stand on my nice books!" said the angry voice from the doorway. Poor Jim stood crest-fallen. "I'm real sorry," he began, but the angry voice continued, "I won't play with you any more, never again; you're a ruffian, that's what you are!"

"I'm not either," said Jim, bristling up; "and you mustn't say such things!"

"I will say it, because it's true," cried the other.

"It is not," said Jim, hotly; "and if you was my size, I'd give you a punchin', so there!"

"I'm a year older than you are," re-

torted Brandt, thoroughly angry, "and you couldn't punch me."

"Couldn't I?" returned the other. "Well, I guess I could — easy; but you're not my size, and I wouldn't fight you."

Brandt's eyes flashed at the implied insult, and Jim tried hard to keep back the tears, but they came, in spite of all, and he rushed out of the room.

When he had gone, Brandt took the beautiful book and carefully wiped the dirt off with his handkerchief. He gazed at the torn page and felt sorry for his book. But a deeper sorrow began to steal into his heart, and it was for Jim. The tears trickled down his cheeks while he took the soiled handkerchief and wiped his face. It left little dirty streaks on the pale cheeks. It was all too bad! They were going to have such a good time, and to think they had quarrelled! He had been so angry that perhaps Jim would never play with him again.

He arose slowly from the floor where he had been sitting with the book, and walked out of the room. He felt lonely and dis-

appointed, and almost without knowing it, he found himself in Mrs. Cole's room. That genial soul was sitting at the window sewing, and looked up with a smile when Brandt entered. She knew at once that something had happened, and said softly, "What is it, dear?"

Brandt was very fond of Mrs. Cole. She was the only mother he had ever known. It was when he was only a little fellow two years old that she first came to him. His father had been very anxious to find the right kind of woman, and he had never regretted his choice.

The good man who recommended her had said, "She is a good woman, refined and lovable; moreover, she has just lost her own little boy. I have known her many years in church work, and found her ever faithful and conscientious."

When Mr. Carter (with a lingering doubt that arose from the great love he bore his helpless child) brought her to where the little face lay among the pillows, like a tender white floweret, he saw her mother's heart go out to this little one, and while the

tears coursed down her cheeks, he stepped softly from the room and left them together.

From that day she was no stranger to Brandt. She had tendered him lovingly when sickness confined him to his bed, and her gentle hand had soothed his little head many a time. Then she had such a fund of good stories that he loved to hear, and she had often played games with him for hours.

Little by little the story of the quarrel came out, as he stood beside her chair, her warm hand on his shoulder. She let him tell it all without interruption, only the soft pressure of her hand encouraging the lad.

When he had finished, there was a word here, a question there, and the child-loving, child-knowing woman understood.

Then they had a little talk together, and when Brandt left the room he was feeling very much better and happier.

The next morning the April rain still continued, and as Brandt could not go out, he wrote the following note: —

"MY DEAR JIM: I am very sorry for being so rude to you yesterday. You did not mean to hurt my books. You are not a ruffian, because you are my friend, and I was very impolite to hurt your feelings. Mrs. Cole says that my playroom is my own castle, and you must never be rude to a guest in your castle. Will you forgive me, and come over and play.

"Your friend,

"BRANDT CARTER."

He read this over to himself, and then sent Mary with it. He stood at the window and watched her until she was out of sight, and then gazed at the big rain-drops as they pattered on the pane.

He was so impatient to see Jim that he could hardly wait, and kept drumming on the window. At last Mary appeared, but to Brandt's disappointment Jim was not with her. He ran to meet her, and she placed in his hands a brown paper package that Jim had sent.

When Brandt opened it there rolled out a big jack-knife on the floor. There was

something written on the brown paper, and Brandt read as follows: —

"MY DEAR BRANDT: I can't come over, 'cause I got to mind the baby, 'cause my mother is churnin'. I'm awful sorry that I hurted your books, and I was all to blame. I send over my jack-knife; it's a fine one, and you can have it to keep for your own. "Your friend, "JIM.

"P. S. I think that shelf needs just one more nail. "J."

Brandt read the note with delight, and then ran and showed it to Mrs. Cole.

"How I should love to see Jim right off now!" he cried.

"Well, perhaps you can; we'll see," said Mrs. Cole.

She had him put on his strong rubber boots, and wrapped him up all snug. Then Pete came around from the barn for him, and they started for Jim's. All at once, when they were outside, Pete caught Brandt

up on his broad shoulders and skipped across the fields. He let down his burden at Jim's door, and Brandt entered in triumph. That was a most delightful afternoon. They played with Jim's baby sister until she crowed with pleasure. Little brother Tommy stood on his head and performed several other tricks that Jim had taught him. Brandt liked to watch Jim's mother at the churn, and from time to time she raised the cover and let him take a peep inside. When they were tired of playing, they all sat on the bed, and Brandt told them some of his stories.

Little Tommy was so impressed by Jack and the Beanstalk that at first he hid his head under the pillow. But after a while he grew braver, and waved his little fat fists, crying, "FEE, FI, FO, FUM." This made the boys laugh, but Tim barked so bravely that one would think the wicked giant were present.

At last Pete called to take Brandt home, and when he saw Mrs. Cole, the happy boy said, "I've had just the jolliest time," and he told her all about it.

"I'm going to write to papa," he continued, "and tell him all about Jim."

"And don't forget to tell him how much stronger you feel," said Mrs. Cole, "because that will make your papa happy, you know."

That evening a letter was on its way to London which read as follows: —

"MY OWN DEAR PAPA: I am a great deal stronger, and my friend Jim is the strongest boy in the world. He has a lovely freckled nose, and even his hands are speckled. He can whistle so beautifully that you would think that it was all the birds taking their turn.

"Sometimes Jim's mother gives me a cup of warm milk right from the cow. Tommy is very fat. I forgot to tell you that Tommy is Jim's little brother, but he doesn't know very much, having a brother like Jim.

"Your own,

"BRANDT."

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF HONEYSUCKLE HILL.

"I THINK the American flag is beautiful, don't you?" asked Brandt.

"Yes," replied Jim; "but there's some pretty good ones here."

They were in Brandt's playroom, and Jim was studying a book that contained a picture of the flag of every nation.

Brandt ran to Bucephalus and took the Stars and Stripes that usually waved over the toy-horse. "The others may be good," he cried, "but this is the best of all.

"And Jim," he continued, his face lighting up, "sometimes they call it, 'Old Glory'; isn't that a splendid name?"

"Fine!" said Jim. "I tell you what I'd like: I'd just like to be a soldier, and go to battle and carry Old Glory."

"Wouldn't it be splendid!" exclaimed Brandt.

"Why couldn't we have a battle in the field?" cried Jim.

"The very thing!" said the other; "let's have it to-day."

They talked over the plans, and Brandt remarked, "We'll have to fight against some other flag, you know."

"Suppose we take the English flag; that's a good one," said Jim, studying the book of flags.

"No," replied Brandt, "that won't do. My papa is in England, so I couldn't fight that one, you see."

"That's so," returned Jim; "let's go and ask Pete; he'll know."

They found Pete, and laid the whole case before him.

"I'll tell you wot," said he; "I'll carry the Hamerican flag, and you boys can fight against it."

"But we wouldn't fight against our flag!" cried Brandt, quickly.

"A course yer wouldn't; but this is going to be a sham battle."

"But even in a sham battle I'd rather not," said the little patriot.

"Well, somebody must," said Jim.

"Look 'ere," said Pete, rubbing his head, "I'll be the hawful king of a bad country on one side, and you boys can be on the hother side, and yer can fight me."

"And what flag will you carry?" asked the boys.

"This'll be my flag," said Pete, and he drew from his pocket a large red handkerchief with a white border.

"That's just the thing!" cried Jim, while Pete got a long stick and nailed his handkerchief to it like a flag.

They sat down and made their plans for the great battle in the afternoon.

"I'll fix it all hup, and 'ave everything ready," said Pete, "while you're at dinner."

In the afternoon Brandt appeared with his handsome American flag, a drum and a trumpet slung over his shoulder.

Jim and Tommy were waiting for him, with Tim frisking about. They all put on soldier hats made of newspaper and got in line. Brandt marched in front, waving the flag, and behind him was Jim, beating the drum. Tommy carried the trumpet,

but was told by his superior officer to blow it only every now and then. Tim accompanied the army, barking joyously until Tommy blew the trumpet. Then he howled.

They marched toward Honeysuckle Hill. It was not very high, but from the top waved the red flag of the bad king.

Pete, the awful king of a bad country, was standing beside his flag, shouting, "Come hon, me foes, come hon!"

The great army started up the hill, but when they were near the top Pete jumped at them as if he were going to knock them all to pieces, and they ran down the hill as fast as they could. They rested a minute when they had reached a safe place, while Pete sang out: —

"'Urrah for me flag, the flag of King Thig-a-ma-roo!"

The boys tried the other side of the hill, but with no better result.

"This time we'll separate," said Jim. "You and Tommy go up on one side, and I'll march on the other side."

Jim's plan was tried, but once more they

were driven back, while Pete shouted at the top of his voice, "Back, back, ye villains; keep hout of the wrath of Shig-a-ma-honey, the fire-eater!" Then he gave a terrible war-whoop, and brandished his arms like an Indian.

Poor little Tommy was so frightened at Pete's war-dance that he never stopped running till he reached a spot away beyond the hill. His newspaper hat was lost in his flight, and Tim followed, barking furiously. Brandt and Jim sat down a moment to rest and talk things over.

"It's a terribly fierce battle," said Brandt, while Jim wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"You bet it is!" replied Jim. "That Pete's a terror."

"Let's try once more," cried Brandt, rising, while Jim took the trumpet that Tommy had dropped and blew very hard.

Tommy, who had decided to view the rest of the battle from afar, could not be a deserter after that trumpet call from his own Jim. So he came running back

as fast as his little fat legs would carry him.

"This is the last time we'll try," cried Brandt. "Come on, soldiers!"

They rushed up the hill, followed by Tim, and just as they reached the top, Pete fell at their feet. "Hi'm tired hout," said he, "and Hi surrender."

"Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes!" shouted Brandt, while Jim waved his hat, and Tim barked louder than ever. As for Tommy, he had been jumping about so much, that all of a sudden he fell in a heap and rolled over and over down the side of the hill like a ball.

They tore up Pete's flag and put theirs in its place, and then sang a verse of the "Star-Spangled Banner."

"The victory is ours!" cried Jim; "and we have caught the enemy."

Then the bad king arose and was led slowly down the hill, and escorted to the barn a prisoner. They left the flag of victory waving where they had placed it, and thus ended the great battle of Honeysuckle Hill.

The bad king was led slowly down the hill.

CHAPTER IV.

SURPRISES.

ONE afternoon the boys were flying a kite down the road, when they happened to see a great bill posted on an old barn. It looked as if it had just been put there, and the boys stopped to see what it was all about.

In large letters was the following notice: "For the United States Army. Wanted — able-bodied men," etc., etc. They read it through, and Brandt said eagerly: "I wonder if there's going to be a war. I must write and ask Cousin Dick about it."

When they returned to the house they found Pete reading a newspaper. He told them that there was really a war between the United States and Spain, and of course everybody was talking about it.

Bill Jones, one of the farm hands, had enlisted, and Sam Peters was going to start

in a few days. The boys found Sam, and plied him with questions, and looked upon him as a hero. They could talk of nothing else.

A letter had been sent to Cousin Dick, but no answer was received, and the boys were in a ferment of excitement and expectation.

In the midst of all this, one day Pete called the boys as they were going fishing, and told Brandt that something had just come for him at the house.

"What is it?" asked Brandt, quickly.

"I don't know for sure, but I can pretty near guess," replied Pete, smiling. "It's a hawful big package."

"You come with me, Jim, and we'll see what it is," said Brandt.

They hurried to the house, and when they got there had a most delightful surprise. There stood a handsome tandem bicycle for Brandt, with a nice letter from papa which said, among other things, "Since my little boy has such a strong friend as Jim, I thought perhaps you and he could ride the tandem together. Only do not forget,

Brandt, that you must be careful and not over-do it."

"Isn't that just splendid of papa?" exclaimed Brandt, while Jim stood lost in admiration of the beautiful present.

"I used to ride a bicycle, but I got tired of it," said Brandt. "Did you ride one, Jim?"

"No," was the answer, "I never was on one in my life. This one is a beauty," he continued.

"The best of it is," cried Brandt, "we can ride together."

"What good times we'll have!" said the happy owner, while his companion examined the mechanism of the wonderful wheel.

Indeed they had good times, for many a spin they took over the country roads, and Jim was overjoyed at his friend's gift.

War and the rumors of war were almost forgotten in the pleasure of the tandem. In a very few weeks Jim became such an expert that he performed several tricks to the delight of a small audience.

Two months passed away in endless joy over the tandem, when one pleasant morning Brandt received a letter from Cousin Dick.

"He's a Rough Rider away down in Cuba — just read his nice letter."

Jim took it and read as follows: —

"MY DEAR LITTLE BRANDT: Your letter was sent to me a long time ago from New York. It was good to read a letter away down in Cuba from my little cousin in Boston. When I come home I will tell you lots of stories about this place, and how we followed our brave colonel up San Juan Hill, and how our glorious flag waves from its height.

"I am glad that you want to be a soldier like your cousin, but hope that you will be a great deal better one than he.

"Aunt Lee writes me from Newport that she is going to Sunnyside Farm next week, accompanied by a dear friend of mine, Miss Robyn.

"Now, Brandt, you can be a real soldier by taking care of this young lady.

"You can write and tell me what you do all day. Lots of love and a long ride on the back of

"COUSIN DICK."

"Just think of getting a letter from a real soldier who is right in the battle!" said Brandt.

"It's splendid!" exclaimed Jim, returning the letter. "Is he very big?"

"Yes, he's as tall as my papa, and so handsome! I'll show you his picture," continued Brandt; "I have it right on a table in my room where I can see it."

A few days later Aunt Lee arrived with a pretty golden-haired girl, who had the bluest of eyes and the sweetest of voices. Brandt lost his heart to her at once because she said to him, "How much you look like your cousin, dear."

She entered into all the boys' plans, and although Jim had been very bashful at first, he soon felt at ease in her sweet, unaffected presence. One afternoon they all went on a little picnic in the woods. She tripped along with the boys, singing snatches of song now and then, and revelling in the delicious odor of the pines.

"What a beautiful old place this is!" she exclaimed, sitting under a group of the fragrant trees. The boys, who had been carry-

ing a basket of lunch, sat down also, and Brandt said, "This is what Mrs. Cole calls 'the merry greenwood.'"

Miss Robyn gave a little laugh, and sang: —

"'Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat.'

"That means you, Jim," she said with a twinkle; "let's hear you tune your merry note."

Jim smiled with pleasure, and immediately gave one of his warbling exhibitions, to the delight of his audience.

While they were enjoying the tempting lunch, Brandt exclaimed, —

"Wouldn't it be fine if Cousin Dick were here!"

"Do you love your cousin *very* much?" asked the young lady, smiling at Brandt.

"Yes'm," answered he; "don't you?"

Miss Robyn laughed merrily, gave his cheek a little pinch, but did not answer. In the days that followed he was a very

busy little soldier, but did not forget his promise to write to Cousin Dick.

One lazy morning, many hundred miles away, the following letter was read: —

"My dear Dick: We are having splendid times at Sunnyside, and I like Miss Robyn very much. She told me her name was Elsie. She does not seem a bit like a grown-up young lady. Sometimes she runs across the field with me and Jim. I asked her the other day, at our picnic, if she didn't love you, and she just pinched my cheek. [Cousin Dick smiled.]

"We have not seen so much of her lately, because Mr. Ware came last Saturday. He said he was only going to stay a couple of days, but he's here yet. They go horseback riding together. [Cousin Dick frowned.]

"Last Monday Pete caught a skunk, but it's such a good long story that I'll keep it until you come to see

"Your own

"Brandt."

CHAPTER V.

FOURTH OF JULY.

FOURTH of July, the day that boy nature can assert itself and for a few blissful hours revel in noise and excitement, is dear to the heart of every American boy. For days before, *our* boys had been talking about the "glorious Fourth," and making plans for some fun on that day.

Pete had been to the city and brought home a large box of something. What it was, no one knew except Pete and Mrs. Cole. The secret was to be held until the great day came. The day before the Fourth, the boys were busy decorating the place and making preparations.

A large flag was placed on each end of the veranda, and smaller ones floated from every window in the house. Over the barn door Pete had arranged a picture of the flagship, the *Olympia*, surrounded by folds

of red, white, and blue bunting. Pictures of Dewey were in evidence, and Chinese lanterns hung from the piazza.

On Honeysuckle Hill the boys piled up twigs, branches, huge logs, dead leaves, and everything that would make a good bonfire.

The first person awake at Sunnyside Farm on Fourth of July morning was Jim. It did not take him very long to get out of doors and blow a great horn. This had been agreed upon the day before as a signal. The one who was awake first was to blow it, so that the other would arise at once. Jim gave three terrific blasts as a signal to Brandt that he was on hand, and I am afraid there was not much sleep at the farm after that. Brandt heard it and jumped out of bed, and in a few minutes he was out and running across the field to meet Jim.

"Hurrah for the Fourth!" shouted Brandt, while Jim, who had been turning "cart wheels" on the grass, jumped to his feet and cried, "One Hurray! Two HURRAY!! THREE HURRAY!!!"

"Hurray!" shouted a small voice from the rear, and there was Tommy emerging from the cottage, clad only in his little shirt, a battered horn in his fist.

"I ith goin' to fire crackers," he cried, running to the boys in his bare feet. Brandt laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"You little rogue, you just go back and get dressed," said Jim.

"I don' want to get drethed," whimpered Tommy; "I 'ust want to fire a cannon." Tommy was afraid he would miss something if he had to dress, and was ready to celebrate just as he was.

"Now, Tommy, be good," coaxed Jim; "we'll wait for you." After a short lecture from brother Jim, Tommy admitted reluctantly that perhaps he had better get some clothes on. There was another round of cheers, and the day's fun began.

After breakfast Pete took out the large box of mystery, and the very first thing they all did was to set off firecrackers.

It was great fun. They fired one or two at a time for a while, and then a great

bunch of them all at once. Tommy had a bag of tiny torpedoes which he threw on a stone, and every time one of them exploded he gave a yell of delight. Tim, being a most patriotic dog, lent his aid in the matter of noise by loud barking and occasional howls.

"Let's get a box," said Jim, "and put several bunches of firecrackers under it." This was tried with splendid effect, until every firecracker had been set off.

The boys made all the noise they wanted, and only stopped when the bell rang for dinner. Jim had been invited to dine with his friend, and enjoyed everything thoroughly. There was delicious salmon that would melt in the mouth, and green peas, fresh from the farm, with other good things in abundance. If there is any better combination to appeal to a hungry boy on the Fourth, I'd like to know what it is.

"I wonder what else Pete has in his box?" said Brandt, during the dinner; and Mrs. Cole said, "You will see them all by and by."

"Won't it look fine to-night, with all the lanterns lit!" exclaimed Jim.

"And that wonderful bonfire," remarked Mr. Ware, who was looking very happy beside Miss Robyn.

"Are there any Indians around here?" asked Elsie, looking from one boy to the other.

"Oh, no," answered Jim; "I never saw one."

"Well, of course I may be mistaken," said the young lady, "but I thought I saw a fierce-looking Indian walking toward Muddy River this morning."

"A real live one?" asked Brandt, in surprise.

"A real live one," repeated Elsie.

"I hope not," said Aunt Lee, with a grim smile. "There are quite enough Indians at Sunnyside, as it is."

After dinner the boys went to the barn to tell Pete what Elsie had seen, but they could not find him. Mrs. Cole suggested that he might have gone to the woods, and the boys started off in that direction.

They had hardly entered the pine grove when they saw a strange sight. There were two Indians standing near some bushes, talking and laughing. One of them began to kick out his legs in the strangest manner. Their faces were turned away from the boys, but suddenly one of the Indians wheeled around and saw the two boys watching them in wonder.

"Watcha, Watcha!" cried the Indian, and they both ran farther into the woods, while the boys took to their heels and ran in the opposite direction. Jim and Brandt never stopped running till they reached the barn, and as Pete was not there, they ran to the house and told Mrs. Cole about the two Indians. She seemed very much surprised, and asked them all sorts of questions. When she had detained them quite a long time, she told them to try to find Pete.

Pete was in the barn this time, and listened to the story about the two Indians with great attention.

"Just think of it!" said Brandt; "they ran away when they saw us."

"You come with us, Pete," cried Jim; "and see if we can see them again."

"No sir!" replied Pete. "Yer don't catch me facin' no Injuns; why," he continued in evident alarm, "they might take it inter their bloomin' 'eads ter scalp us."

At this possibility the boys weakened, and decided they would not go into the woods again.

"Hi'll tell you wot," said Pete. "You boys rig up like Injuns and march around."

"That would be fun!" cried Brandt, and they started in to do it.

They got some juicy strawberries, and when they had stained their faces, Pete arranged some feathers on a string, and this was tied around Brandt's waist, while Jim had feathers sticking out all over him.

Tommy begged to be made like "a Injun," too; and the boys dressed him up in fine style.

Pete gave them a small blanket, and they tied it around Tommy's waist. They rubbed strawberries on his little nose until it was crimson, and when Jim had stuck

some feathers around his hat, Tommy made a very funny Indian.

Mrs. Cole waved her handkerchief to the three braves, and then they marched to the brown cottage to show Jim's mother how fine they looked. They ran to the barn to ask Pete to dress up, too, but he was not to be found.

"Let's march down the road," said Brandt; "we'll let Tommy go first."

Down the road started the Indians, with Tim barking at their heels, blowing their horns as they went.

All of a sudden two Indians jumped over a hedge away down the road and ran toward them.

Tommy gave a yell of terror, and the boys turned and ran to the house. The little fellow fell in the dust, and called on Jim to save him, but the others were far ahead, and Tommy struggled to his feet and waddled to the house, a sorry little figure with a dusty blanket tied around his waist, and crying as if it were not the glorious Fourth.

When the boys looked back, not a trace of the Indians could be seen. Mrs. Cole

appeared on the piazza, and they hurried to tell her what had happened.

"I think you had better go indoors a minute," said that good lady; and as they had been up so very early that morning, and were just a little tired, they went into the sitting room and stretched themselves on a great couch.

When they had talked about the two Indians for a long time, Jim arose and walked to the window.

He saw Pete just crossing the yard, and he told him about the adventure in the road.

"Them Injuns are after somethin', that's plain," declared Pete.

There was no further excitement until night. When it was dark Pete went around and lit the lanterns. Then he brought out the large box again, which contained all kinds of fireworks.

All the folks came out and sat on the piazza and watched Pete. Whenever a beautiful sky-rocket would shoot up, burst, and send out a shower of shining sparks, the audience clapped. Two Roman can-

dles, one on each side of the path, gave a fine red light. Pete fired off a great many rockets, and displayed all the mysteries that he had brought in the box. Then he started to light the bonfire on Honeysuckle Hill. The boys wanted to go with him, but Pete said, "Them Injuns might be prowlin' around," so they decided to stay on the piazza.

In a few moments the bonfire was burning, and lighted up everything around it. All at once an Indian appeared crouching before the blaze and began to dance around it.

Pete came running to the piazza, saying, "Don't be afraid, he's going to give us a war dance, that's all."

"I wonder where the other one is?" said Miss Robyn.

"Did you see him, Pete?" asked Brandt; but Pete had disappeared, and everybody was watching the bonfire.

"Look, look, there's the other!" cried Jim; and true enough, the other Indian suddenly appeared. The two Indians shook hands, and then proceeded to walk one behind the other with stealthy steps, glancing

to the right and left. At first they went slowly, then each time a little faster.

They brandished their arms and made a most weird picture in the light from the bonfire. Suddenly they let a war-whoop, and jumped in such a wild manner that the boys darted into the house, and all the folks on the piazza stood. The boys kept perfectly still, and all at once they heard a voice say, "Ain't yer goin' to give a poor Injun somethin'?"

"That sounds like Pete," said Jim, and he opened the door and peeped out.

There stood the two Indians right on the piazza, and everybody around them talking and laughing. The boys came out, and a merry time they had when they discovered that the Indians who had scared them were only Pete and Mr. Ware disguised.

"That was very cleverly done," said Mrs. Cole and Miss Elsie Robyn, both of whom were in the secret all the time. The boys laughed to think that they had been deceived so easily.

CHAPTER VI.

A RUNAWAY.

THE boys had a little adventure on the tandem one afternoon, that was not soon forgotten. They had started out for a ride, taking the road leading to the village. It was straight, well made, and hard — just the road for a fast ride. Running parallel with their road, a broad field between, was another, about an eighth of a mile away. It was hidden from their view by trees and bushes, but the two roads converging half a mile ahead became one — the pike or county road.

The boys rode leisurely at first, talking and enjoying themselves as only two boys can. As they wheeled along and reached a point about half a mile from the junction of the roads, they heard a scream.

This was followed by the sound of hoofs. The boys quickened their speed, and just

then, through an opening in the trees, they saw a sight that made them turn pale with fear.

"It's a runaway!" cried Jim, putting all his strength in his riding.

"Let's get off," said Brandt; but Jim cried out quickly, —

"No, it's too late." They had gained the main road and the horse was behind them. The brief glance that the boys had through the opening showed an open buggy, on the seat of which was a little girl holding on with both hands for dear life. Her scream of fright had given way to a dumb terror, as she was carried along by the frightened horse.

On and on flew the tandem, the leaders in a mad race. But Jim's coolness was gradually asserting itself, and his strong steady pedalling filled Brandt with new courage. They were a good distance ahead of the horse, and Jim knew that without much effort they could leave him far behind.

But the picture of the helpless little girl arose before his eyes, and he turned his

head and shouted, with all his strength, "Hold on tight, and don't jump out, we'll save you." How he was going to do it, the boy did not know. They rode on like the wind, with wildly beating hearts, and behind them the maddened horse with his precious burden.

The boys turned off into another road, and when Jim looked back he saw that the wild horse had followed them. At last the boys saw just ahead of them a private residence. There was a broad driveway, approached by two gates that stood invitingly open. Why he turned into this driveway, Jim never could tell. He had a dim recollection afterward of thinking he would get help, and he had a wild hope that the horse might follow him.

The hope was realized; the maddened horse had followed the tandem so long that without a quiver it dashed into the driveway and made for a barn that was open. But before it reached the barn door, strong hands had stopped it, and when the boys dismounted and looked around, they saw two men holding the horse's head. In a

few minutes several people came out of the house and surrounded the buggy. The little girl was lifted out by loving arms and, save for the fright, was not hurt at all.

The boys came forward a minute, and stood looking at the horse. Just then the little girl, whose courage was returning when she found herself in her father's arms, saw the boys.

"There are the boys, papa," she said, "who told me to hold on."

The man approached Jim and said, "Did you see the accident?"

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

"What became of the young man?" asked the child's father.

"We didn't see any young man, sir," replied Jim; "only the little girl."

"Where did you first see the horse?"

Then Brandt explained the whole story. He told how they lived at Sunnyside Farm, and had just started out for a ride on the tandem. Of the spot where they had first heard the scream, and the subsequent events. When the people had heard Brandt's story, they talked with a great deal of excite-

ment about "Ben," who had evidently been the companion of the child. One of the men started off to find him, and our two young heroes, thinking they could be of no further use, mounted the tandem and rode away unnoticed. Instead of continuing on to the village, they decided to go home. They had had enough excitement for one day.

As they wheeled along over the ground of the late runaway, they met a young man running toward them.

He asked the boys, with a troubled manner, if they had seen the runaway.

"Yes, sir," answered Brandt; "they are all safe."

"Are you Ben?" asked Jim, suddenly; "because if you are, they are all waiting for you at the house."

A look of relief passed over the young man's face, and he murmured his thanks and hurried on.

"If we had thought of it," said Jim, "we might have taken him home on the tandem. One of us could have waited, you know."

"That's so," replied Brandt. "I'll jump off, and you turn back and overtake him."

In a few minutes Jim had overtaken the young man, and asked him if he wouldn't get home quicker on the tandem.

The young man thanked Jim, and though the tandem was a little small, he mounted and rode home.

When they reached the gate Jim said, "This is where the horse turned in."

"He knew his own ground," said the young man; "he belongs in here.

"He is a new horse," continued the stranger, "and my father did not want me to take him, but I have driven so many horses that I thought I could manage him. He was all right till I got out of the team to get some flowers for Marjorie. He suddenly took fright at something, and started off like mad."

Jim told the young man about his part in the mishap, and after thanking our little hero, the young man hurried on to the house.

When Jim returned to Brandt, he found him resting on the roadside.

"Are you tired, Brandt?"

"Not at all," was the answer; "I feel good to think that little girl was not hurt."

"You're a soldier," said Jim; "you did fine in that runaway."

Brandt blushed with pleasure. He would rather have his friend praise him than almost anybody else, but he answered quickly, "I didn't do anything, it was you who did it all."

When they reached home they related the whole adventure to Pete, who listened to the story, and then said in a very solemn voice, with a worried look on his sunny face, "Look 'ere, boys, don't yer hever try ter stop a runaway 'orse, 'cause ye'd get 'urted terrible. 'Osses do act kind er queer at times, an' no matter 'ow 'ard 'e runs, a 'orse is bound ter stop sudden. It's a lucky thing that 'orse followed ye 'ome inter that barn.

"Now you boys just take this advice from one that knows a leetle about it. There's some things a boy wants ter keep hout of the way of, an' shun fer all 'e's worth, an' one of them things is a runaway 'orse."

When Pete delivered this little lecture he felt better.

Mrs. Cole felt very nervous when she heard about it, and fearful that the excitement would be too much for the delicate boy, but he experienced no ill effects from the adventure. He was naturally a courageous lad, but the sickness that had weakened his body had its effect on his physical courage. But the blood of brave men flowed in his veins, and he was at heart a hero.

The next morning a handsome carriage stopped at Sunnyside Farm, and a tall man, accompanied by a lady and a little girl, entered the house. It was Mr. Lane and his wife, the parents of the child who had been in the runaway the day before. When Mrs. Cole appeared, and he had made himself known, he said, "I did not quite understand yesterday the brave action of the boys who said they belonged here. They went away before we had an opportunity of thanking them."

Mrs. Lane had been studying Mrs. Cole for several minutes, when all at once she said, "You were Helen Day, I'm sure."

The parlor was darkened, but Mrs. Cole came quickly forward and put out her hand. "My old classmate!" she exclaimed; "is it possible!"

The two women had not seen each other for a great many years, and the meeting was indeed a surprise. They talked together for a long time about the many changes that had taken place in their lives. At last Mrs. Cole sent for Brandt and Jim, and when the boys entered, Mr. and Mrs. Lane thanked them for their kindness and bravery.

"And Marjorie wishes to thank you, too," said Mrs. Lane, sweetly.

The little girl glanced shyly at the boys from under dark lashes, and whispered her thanks.

"And now," said Mr. Lane, "I should like to have you all come and spend some afternoon at The Maples."

"Come Friday afternoon," said Mrs. Lane; "and you be sure to come, Helen," she whispered to Mrs. Cole.

With many thanks the boys promised to go, little dreaming of what would happen in the meantime.

CHAPTER VII.

FUDGE.

"WHAT a queer chapter for a boy's story," you will say, "I thought only gir—" But, my dear, before you say another word, show me the boy who does not like sweets, and I will take this chapter right out of my book.

I am quite sure it would not have happened but for Miss Elsie Robyn's resourceful presence. Be that as it may, she suggested it one wet afternoon when Brandt had grown weary of everything.

"Can't I send for Jim, too," asked Brandt, when the plan had been proposed.

"Certainly," answered Elsie, sweetly; "get Jim and Tommy and the baby, if they can smuggle her over."

"I am afraid the baby is out of the question," said Mrs. Cole, smiling.

When Jim and Tommy arrived on the

scene, they found their friends had taken possession of the great kitchen. Mrs. Cole had just fastened a large gingham apron on Elsie, who danced about waving a spoon over her head.

"Behold a nymph of the ladle," she sang airily, and immediately put a great quantity of sugar into the pan.

By this time the boys were in a state of expectation, and Tommy was jumping around like a kitten.

"What ith it you're goin' to make?" lisped Tommy, stopping his antics a moment to get a taste of sugar.

"Fudge, my dear!" answered Elsie, as though she had said Fie! "Ever eat any?"

This answer seemed to tickle Tommy, and he laughed loudly.

"Where did you learn to make it?" asked Brandt, standing beside Jim, his hands in his pockets.

"At school, of course," replied Miss Robyn, who had now reached the stage where she was stirring the mass of sweetness.

"It wasn't down in the list of studies,

you know, but I was taught music, French, and Fudge — especially Fudge."

The boys looked puzzled, but Mrs. Cole laughed merrily.

"Why do they call it 'Fudge'"? asked Brandt, suddenly.

"Now, my friend," replied Elsie, taking up a spoonful of the brown mass, "you mustn't ask such hard questions."

"I'd like to know though," said Brandt; "wouldn't you, Jim?"

"Yes," returned Jim; "but perhaps they named it after the man who first thought of it."

"Now isn't that just like a boy!" cried Elsie, turning to Mrs. Cole. "With the superb selfishness of his sex, Jim wouldn't even give a woman the credit of discovering fudge."

"But it's done!" she exclaimed; "just wait until it cools, and then!"

After a while it was cut in little squares, and everybody had a taste. It was very delicious, and they all sat down to enjoy the feast.

"I like suds," said Tommy, with his

mouth very full. This was as near as he could get to the name, and it made everybody laugh.

"I think fudge is splendid!" cried Brandt, "and I'm going to learn how to make it; but I would like to know why they call it by such a funny name."

"Well," said Miss Robyn, "listen, and I'll tell you how it *might* have happened.

"A long time ago, a dear little maid might have learned how to make it all by herself. That is, you know, before anybody else in the world ever thought of it.

"Perhaps it tasted so good that she brought some to her grandpa, and whispered, 'Have some of my candy, grandpa dear?'

"'What's that!' cried the old gentleman, who had not heard a word. (He was reading his newspaper and didn't like to be disturbed.)

"'Candy, grandpa,' repeated the little maid.

"'Fudge!' said the old gentleman, pushing up his specks. 'What is it?'

"'It's just — "Fudge,"' replied the little maid."

Everybody liked this story very much, and Miss Robyn continued, "Or perhaps it happened in this way: —

"There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, she had so many children she didn't know what to do."

"Ol' 'oman, ol' 'oman, wot lived in a shoe," echoed Tommy.

"Yes, my dear," continued the story-teller; "and you know where there are so many children, some of them are sure to have the measles."

"I had 'em, I had 'em, right here!" cried Tommy.

"Did you really?" replied Elsie. "I never knew they settled in the nose."

The boys roared with laughter at Tommy, and she continued, "Well, this old woman who lived in the shoe had to give her children medicine when they were sick. Now sometimes, you know, little boys and girls don't like to take their medicine. When there was a row of little children all in bed with the measles, the old woman came in

with a bottle and a spoon. 'Oo-boo-hoo, I don't want any medicine!' cried the first little boy.

"'Fudge!' said the old woman. 'Drink it right down, and I'll give you something nice.' So he took the spoonful of medicine, and she gave him something nice.

"'Aa-baa-haa, marmer, marmer!' cried the next little boy, when she held the spoon to his lips. 'I don't like it, I don't like it!'

"'Fudge! Fudge!' grumbled the old woman. 'Take your medicine like a man, and I'll give you something sweet.' And he took the spoonful, so she gave him something sweet.

"'Ooley, booley, hooley!' yelled the third little baby. "I don' wan' it, I don' wan' it!'

"'Fudge! Fudge! Fudge!' growled the old woman. 'Sit right up and swallow it quick, and I'll give you something good.'

"He sat right up and nearly swallowed spoon and all, and then she gave him something good.

"Now every time she said 'Fudge,' she had something nice and sweet and good that she had made up all by herself for her babies."

Tommy was more impressed by this story than anybody else. Whenever Miss Robyn told how the children cried, Tommy set up a peal of merriment.

After a while they had eaten all the fudge, and they went upstairs to Brandt's playroom.

Miss Robyn played games with the boys until somebody knocked at the door. It was Mr. Ware, and he said, "Don't you want to come and see the rainbow?"

The boys thought they would like to see it also, and they ran down to the piazza to get the beautiful view.

The rainbow arched the sky with its tinted glory, and Elsie, who was standing beside Mr. Ware, exclaimed, "Rainbow at night, sailors' delight. You boys can sail on Muddy River to-morrow in perfect safety."

"Yes, that's so," replied Jim; "it's just

fine after a rain. We'll have lots of fun on the raft."

"How I would like to find the end of the rainbow!" said Brandt.

"Why?" asked Jim, quickly.

"Because there's a treasure there, bags full of gold, you know," was the answer.

"Brandt, you're a little dreamer," whispered Elsie, as they all went indoors to supper.

One day, two weeks later, Cousin Dick received another letter with this news: —

"More company came the other day. Lots of young people, Pete says; but some of them don't look very young to me. I'm sorry that Mr. Ware has his horse's tail cut off; and Dick, dear, I can't take care of Miss Robyn. She doesn't go with us any more, and I don't understand young ladies, anyway. I asked Jim's advice, but the only girl he knows very well is his sister Katie, and she will not be three till March. The company play golf most all the time. At first we were caddies, Jim and I; but Mrs. Cole thought it made me too tired, and so Jim does it alone.

"I feel real lonesome sometimes, since all the company came, and I'd love to be down there with you, Dick. I could help you lots more in Cuba than I can at Sunnyside."

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO LITTLE PATRIOTS.

"I WISH I was grown up so that I could go to the war," said Jim, the following afternoon. The boys were sitting near the old barn that had the great bill posted on it, and Brandt answered quickly, "So do I." "Boys like us go sometimes," he added after a pause.

"Do they really?" asked his companion. "but what can they do?"

"Well, didn't you ever hear about little drummer boys? And besides, they could help the soldiers, you know."

"Perhaps they need some boys now," remarked Jim, thoughtfully.

"I know I could help Cousin Dick if I went," cried Brandt, eagerly.

They talked about it until it was time for supper.

That night Brandt asked Mrs. Cole what

the men did when they wanted to go to the war.

When she had told him all about it, Brandt said, "Isn't it noble to serve one's country!"

"The noblest thing anybody can do," replied Mrs. Cole.

"Thank you; I'm so glad you said that!" cried Brandt.

The next morning, just after breakfast, the two boys started on the tandem down the long dusty country road.

They had resolved to do a great thing. They were going to the recruiting office in the city and find out if they could help their country; then they intended to come back to the farm, bid good-by to everybody, and start for the war.

The house was soon out of sight. They sped along, passing farms and cottages and long stretches of green meadow-land. Jim's legs went so fast you could scarcely see them going around. They read on a white sign-post, as they rode along, "Boston — 23 miles." On and on they flew, like the wind, passing sleepy-looking oxen in the

road, whose driver regarded with wonder the two boys flying by. They kept straight on, from one road to another, watching for the sign-posts as they went along, to see how many miles they had to go. Sometimes Brandt got tired and took his feet off the pedals, and Jim did all the work alone.

The next post they reached read, "Boston — 15 miles."

"Do let us get off here," said Brandt, "and rest a minute."

"All right," said Jim, dismounting, but feeling as fresh as when he left Sunnyside Farm. They stretched on a patch of grass, and Brandt gave a long sigh.

"It's too bad I forgot my watch," he murmured.

"Yes," replied the other; "it would be fine to know just what time it is."

"We'll get there and be back before dinner," said Brandt.

"Sure," answered the other; "we can do that easy."

After a short rest the boys mounted the tandem again and continued their journey. Away they sped, straining forward a little

in going up a hill, but coasting down on the other side, as if it were a toboggan chute.

You must know that Jim had become such an expert rider on Brandt's wheel that he was perfectly confident in everything pertaining to it.

As they flew along more sign-posts were passed, and they did not stop again until they came to one that said, "Boston — 9 miles."

They dismounted again to rest and have a little talk.

The houses were very much nearer together than they had been a few miles farther back.

"Do you feel tired, Jim?" asked one little soldier.

"Not at all," replied the other, who never stopped to rest for himself; "do you?"

"I'm just a little tired," answered Brandt, "and still I haven't done half as much work as you; sometimes, you know, I put up my feet and you did it all."

"That's nothing," was the answer; "I'm so strong, you know."

"Let's close our eyes a minute and take

a short nap," said Brandt, dreamily. "You know sometimes soldiers have to sleep on the road."

"Well, you take a nap, if you want to," returned Jim, "and I'll watch."

"You'll be the sentry," murmured Brandt, closing the tired brown eyes.

After a few minutes the sentry became restless. He longed to be on the tandem again. So sturdy was Jim that he could not understand fatigue in another. He warbled tunefully for a minute, and then said,—

"Don't you think, Brandt, we had better start?"

"I suppose we had," answered the tired soldier, opening his eyes and rising slowly.

Once again they mounted the wheel and resumed the journey.

Swift and steady went the tandem over the long road, and the boys did not stop again until they reached Boston. Brandt had said that he knew all the roads in his native city, but it so happened that he had never been in that section where the recruiting office was located.

It took a great many turns and questions before the street was found, and there were so many teams and people that the boys dismounted and walked.

They were very much puzzled by the crooked streets and numerous buildings, but at last reached the street and number they wanted.

In the excitement of finding a good place for their tandem to stand, they did not notice that it said over the door they opened, "John Bingham, Agt."

"Hello, my little man, what can I do for you?" said a stout, pleasant-faced gentleman, who was sitting behind a desk.

"If you please, sir," said Brandt, while Jim fingered his torn straw hat, "we came to offer our services for our country — if you need us."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed the man, taking out a handkerchief and coughing. "I see, I see; so you would like to enlist?"

"Yes, sir," answered Brandt, who remembered that that was the very word Sam Peters and Mrs. Cole had used.

"We would like to enlist for the same place as Cousin Dick," he added.

The man coughed again, and put his handkerchief before his face.

"Well, now, my good boy, just answer a few questions," said the stout gentleman.

"Yes, sir," replied Brandt, straightening up, and looking with grave, dark eyes.

"In the first place," said the stout gentleman, with a good deal of coughing, "are you married or single?"

"I'm not married, you know; neither is Jim," returned Brandt, quickly, while Jim was shaking his head in violent denial.

It was queer how hard the gentleman coughed and buried his face in his handkerchief.

At last he looked at Brandt again, and asked, "A citizen of the United States, of course?"

Brandt looked puzzled and turned to his companion, but Jim was gazing straight ahead and could not take his eyes from a small crack in the wall directly over the stout gentleman's head. The stout gentle-

man was coughing, and Brandt said, "We live at Sunnyside Farm, is that what you mean, sir?"

The man nodded his head, but it was quite a few minutes before he took his handkerchief from his face. When he did, he said, "Now is there anything in particular that you boys can do pretty well?"

Brandt thought a moment and answered, "We can both drum, you know;" then a sudden thought struck him, and he added quickly, "Jim can whistle like a bird!"

"Good!" cried the stout gentleman; "so you can both drum, and Jim is a bird — I mean, whistles like a bird; very good, very good.

"Now, my little man, I'll take your name and address, and then you go right home and wait until I write to you," said the man, taking a pen.

"My name is Brandt Lamson Carter."

While the man was writing it, the boy went a step nearer to Jim, and said in a loud whisper, "Have you a middle name?" Without taking his eyes from the crack in

the wall, Jim shook his head. "And Jim Mullin, if you please, sir," added Brandt; "Sunnyside Farm."

"Very good," replied the man, writing. Then he arose and said, "Now good-by, and go right home like good boys."

"Good-by, sir," said Brandt, as he opened the door.

Mr. Bingham muttered to himself as they disappeared, "If Puds were here, what sport he would have."

When the boys reached the sidewalk, what was their dismay to find their tandem gone. At first they could not believe their eyes, and looked around for it for a long time. At last they realized that somebody had taken it, and they could have cried with disappointment.

They started to walk, and were jostled hither and thither by the crowd. As they went along they came to a side street that did not look so crowded, and they turned into it.

Both boys were silent. The stout gentleman and the war were forgotten for the time being; the loss of the tandem filling their

thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. To think that their beautiful wheel had been stolen, and perhaps they would never see it again!

Just then a group of street urchins came out of an alleyway, and seeing the two strangers started in to have some fun with them.

The leader, who was a good head taller than Jim, walked up to Brandt and said, "Hello, Willie, does yer mammer know yer out?"

"My name isn't Willie, it's Brandt," said the boy, and continued to walk along.

"O me, O my!" said the big fellow. "It's Branty, is it? Say, fellers, how'd yer like Branty?"

His followers, thus addressed, roared with delight, and one of them cried, "Look at de odder guy; he's a hayseed."

But the big fellow meant to have his fun with Brandt. The pale face and dark eyes seemed to interest the leader of the gang, and he suddenly jumped and made a move to take Brandt's hat.

But just as he raised his arm, Jim (who

had thus far remained perfectly quiet) faced him. Quick as a flash Jim gave the bully a stinging blow that sent him reeling among his companions.

"You coward!" cried Jim, with flashing eyes, while the others regarded with silent admiration the one who could "do" their leader. The bully straightened himself up, and with an ugly look on his face glared at Jim.

Rage at the thought that anybody would dare to strike him, and shame to think that his companions had witnessed it, made him furious.

"So I'm er coward, am I?" he snarled.

"That's what I said," replied Jim, coolly; "a coward."

"And yer want ter fight, der yer?" continued the other between his teeth.

"No," answered Jim, quietly, "I don't care to fight, and if I have to, I take some one my size; but this is my chum" (pointing to Brandt), "and if you touch him, I'll lick you quick."

The bully squared off and made a rush at him; but Jim was ready for him, and he

let out with his right arm, knocking the coward backward among his companions again.

At this point things might have been serious, had not a policeman suddenly appeared on the scene, and the gang scattered.

"Let's get off this street as quick as we can, it's dreadful!" said Brandt, feeling sick at heart.

The boys retraced their steps and were soon lost in the crowds of people on the main thoroughfare. It was a sultry day in early August, and the tired boys continually wiped the perspiration from their faces.

"I wish we were home," sighed Brandt. "I feel terribly tired, and my head aches."

"I don't see how we're going to get home," answered Jim, sadly.

"I left some money in my other pocket," said Brandt, regretfully; "if we only had it, we could go home by train."

Jim was silent a long time, but at last he said, "Suppose we go back to the soldier office and tell the man."

"All right," answered the other, and

once more they tried to find the stout gentleman's quarters.

When they reached it they found to their disappointment a small card on the door that read, "Gone to dinner, back at two."

"Isn't that just too bad!" cried Brandt, almost ready to burst into tears.

"Never mind," said Jim, hopefully, "we'll just wait until he comes back."

"I did not think it was dinner-time," sighed Brandt. "I thought we'd be at home long before this."

"So did I," returned Jim. "I wonder what the folks will think?"

"I hope they won't think we are lost," exclaimed Brandt, "because that would worry dear Mrs. Cole, you know."

"I wish we had told them all about it before we started," cried honest Jim; "and then if we did not get back in time, they'd know just where we were."

"It's all my fault," murmured Brandt. "You wanted to tell them, but I said to keep it a secret and surprise them; but," he added, in a tired voice, "we'll tell them the very next time."

Their conversation was interrupted at this point by the joyful appearance of the stout gentleman.

"Well! well! well!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands, "back again. I thought you were home by this time."

"So we might have been, sir," replied Jim (Brandt was too tired to talk), "if our tandem had not been stolen."

"How was that?" asked the stout gentleman, taking a bunch of keys out of his pocket. He was a bashful lad, was Jim, in the presence of strangers, but somehow he forgot to be on this occasion, and told the whole story from the beginning. The stout gentleman did not open his office door as he intended, instead he asked the boys several questions in a very serious voice. Then he said, "Come with me."

They followed him out into the street, and after many turns reached a large railroad station. Into the depot and up to a window walked their friend, and bought two tickets. Then they followed him out and up the steps into a train.

"Now, my little boys," said the man,

"don't you leave your seats until the conductor comes to you. He'll take you safe home. It's too bad you lost your tandem," he continued, "but remember, never again to come into the city without telling your folks, will you promise me that?" he said, looking earnestly at the boys.

"Yes, sir, we promise, and thank you very much," replied Jim, as the stout gentleman disappeared through the doorway.

The train did not start for thirty-five minutes, but it seemed hours to the tired, hungry little soldiers. At last a bell rang, and the train began to move slowly out of the station.

During the ride, the boys talked but seldom, and reached the little country depot an hour later, feeling utterly wretched.

They had still three miles to walk before they reached the farm, and Brandt was so weary that it seemed as if he would drop on the roadside. How different everything appeared to the tired boys!

They had started out in the morning with flying colors on a beautiful tandem

that went like the wind. They were coming back weary and footsore.

Poor little patriots! their loss had been heavy, it is true, but a little seed had taken root that day in the field of a lad's experience that would blossom and bear fruit by and by.

When they had gone about a mile, Brandt sat down on the roadside.

"I—can't—go—any more—I—" but he did not finish. Overcome with the heat and fatigue, the poor little fellow fainted in Jim's arms.

Dear, patient Jim! He held the little boy tenderly, while big tears trickled down the freckled cheeks. Suddenly a horse appeared in the distance, and through the mist of tears Jim saw that it was Dandy and the dog-cart, with Pete driving.

CHAPTER IX.

QUIET TIMES.

BRANDT had been very ill for many days after his trip to the city, but at last was feeling well enough to sit up in bed. Miss Robyn came to see him every day and sat by his bedside. The boy had grown to love the golden-haired girl, and watched for her visits.

One day when she was just about to leave him, Brandt said suddenly, "Please bring me Cousin Dick's picture."

She brought the photograph from the table, and Brandt gazed at the fine manly face for a moment, saying, "I thought I'd be down there helping him by this time."

"Did you, dear?" said the girl. "But boys don't go to war, you know, they stay at home and help."

"Yes, that's what Mrs. Cole said," returned Brandt; and he kissed the photo-

graph and returned it to Miss Robyn. She was just going to put it back in its place on the table, when he said, "Won't you please do me a favor, Elsie?"

"Yes, dear, what is it?"

"You kiss Dick's picture, too," said Brandt, in his sweetest manner.

Miss Robyn gave a merry laugh, and blushed like a rose. "You dear little tease!" she exclaimed, and put the picture to her pretty lips.

"There now, Brandt, you must promise never to tell anybody, because they might not understand." This was said earnestly, and he answered, "I promise."

"A gentleman never breaks his word, you know," whispered Elsie, as she glided from the room.

What a surprise Brandt had the next day, when the door opened and in walked Cousin Dick, his skin brown as an Indian. They had a delightful talk, and Dick heard all about the adventure in the city, and how the beautiful tandem had been stolen.

That night Mrs. Cole was sitting beside Brandt. It was a delightful evening in

late August. The days had been hot and sultry, but the evenings cool and refreshing. Through the open window was wafted the delicious odor of the clematis that climbed over the veranda. Downstairs Miss Robyn was singing an old love song, and after a while a man's voice joined hers.

Brandt listened a long time to the music, and then asked, "Who is singing with Elsie?"

"That is Mr. Ware, dear," was the answer.

A few days after this Dick was sitting beside Brandt, but he was very quiet, and looked gloomy. Brandt had tried several times to make him talk, but without success. At last the boy said suddenly, "Say, Dick, why don't you get Dandy and Sport and take out Miss Robyn?"

"Because she prefers to go with Mr. Ware," was the quick reply.

"Oh, does she like him better than you?"

"Evidently," replied Cousin Dick, shortly; "but we won't talk about it."

"Well," said Brandt, slowly, "I won't

talk if you don't want me to, but I bet she never kissed Mr. Ware's picture."

"Why," asked Dick, with newly awakened interest, "whose picture did she kiss?"

"I forgot," answered Brandt, gazing with all his might at the picture on the table. "I promised I wouldn't tell."

Cousin Dick followed the boy's gaze, and his eyes rested on his own photograph.

There was a puzzled expression came over Dick's face for a minute, and then he looked very happy. He arose and sauntered to the window, whistling a little tune. Brandt did not see him again all day. That evening just after dinner Elsie came in to see Brandt. She was dressed all in white, with a pink rose in her hair, and the little boy thought he had never seen her look so pretty.

She kissed him and said, "We are all going away to-morrow early, and I must tell you, Brandt, before I go, how happy I am."

"Is Cousin Dick going with you?" asked Brandt, eagerly.

"Yes, dear, always," she whispered softly, and her cheeks were the color of the rose in her hair.

It was very late when Dick's step was heard outside the door. Brandt had waited all the evening for him, and was just going to sleep when his handsome cousin came into the room.

They had a little talk together, and then Cousin Dick leaned over to kiss Brandt good-by. Just as he did, a pink rose fell from inside his coat on the white coverlet.

The next morning early, all the company departed from Sunnyside Farm, and Brandt was alone. Every day while he had been sick Jim had come in to ask about his little friend. Jim was not allowed to see Brandt; it was part of his punishment. But he waited hopefully, and one day Mrs. Cole brought him upstairs. When they were in Brandt's room she stepped softly out and left the two boys together.

Brandt was sitting up in bed, and greeted his friend Jim affectionately. "Just think, I can get up to-morrow," he said, smiling,

"and then we'll have our good times again."

"But we'll never do *that* again, will we?" said Jim, earnestly.

"Never!" replied Brandt, who knew what "that" meant. "And oh, Jim, I've had such good talks with Mrs. Cole! The first days of my sickness she wouldn't let me talk at all. She just smoothed my head, and I slept most all the time. But one day, Jim, she told me ever so many things that we never thought of. Did you know, Jim dear, you needn't go to war to be a soldier? Everybody who does his duty is a soldier. You and I are little soldiers every time we are honest. Going away into the city without telling our folks wasn't honest, Jim; and did you know that the first thing a good soldier must do is obey? If you and I are not good *little* soldiers, we'll never make good *big* soldiers. She said lots of things that I'll tell you when I'm up again. And, Jim dear," he continued, "I was mistaken, little boys like us don't go to war."

"I know it," said his friend, quietly.

Just then Mrs. Lane and Marjorie called with some beautiful flowers. They had driven over from The Maples every day while Brandt had been ill, to inquire for him.

CHAPTER X.

THE MINNEHAHA.

THE first two or three days that Brandt was about again the boys did not do very much but sit and talk over all the things that had happened.

"Cousin Dick was terribly sorry because my tandem was stolen," said Brandt. "I told him all about it, and he wrote the number of it in a little book, and put it in his pocket."

"Did he write 1 2 8 6 9 7?" asked Jim, quickly.

"Yes," returned Brandt, "I saw it myself."

"Do you suppose he's going to find it?" said Jim, eagerly.

"I don't know," replied the other; "he didn't say much, only took the number."

That afternoon the boys walked to Muddy River where Jim kept his raft, and while

Brandt stretched on the bank, Jim floated around.

"Do you know," cried Jim, jumping off the raft and sitting beside Brandt, "I have thought of a great scheme."

"What is it?" asked Brandt, quickly.

"I'm going to make a canoe," replied the other.

"Do you know how?" said Brandt, with a great deal of interest.

"I think so," returned Jim. "I need some cheese boxes; I have all the other things.

"One day while you were sick," he continued, "a big fellow came down the stream in a canoe, and asked me to get him some water. When I brought it to him we talked about his canoe, and he told me just how to make one."

"It's very easy," said Brandt, when Jim had explained how the canoe could be made. "Won't it be just fine to have one!"

They told Pete all about it when they returned, and he promised to get Jim the boxes. The very next day he went away "on business" he said, and when he came

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back had more cheese boxes than the boys had ever seen together. In a very short time Jim was working on the canoe. His tool-chest was in view, and he went about with the air of a skilled workman. Everybody helped, especially Pete, who seemed to know just what to do. Tommy and the dog watched the progress of the work, and Brandt was general superintendent. The boxes had been placed in water to get a thorough soaking, and when taken out they were soft and pliable. They formed the framework of the canoe, and were put together with great care and skill on the long keel. When this was finished, Pete got a piece of canvas to cover the framework, and Jim's father gave them some paint. Brandt did all the painting, and everybody said it was a very artistic piece of work. He painted the bottom green and the sides white, then the canoe was put one side to dry while some fine paddles were made.

The boys were delighted over the result of their effort, and the day it was completed Brandt talked it over with Mrs. Cole till bedtime.

She told him how the Indians made canoes of birch bark, and how expert they were in handling them. She related how the first settlers who came to America found the red men gliding down the streams and shooting the rapids in canoes. Then she showed Brandt a picture of a wild race down the river between the Indians. The boy was very much interested to hear about them. When Mrs. Cole read some lines from a beautiful poem entitled "Hiawatha's Sailing," he listened with pleased attention.

"'Thus the birch canoe was builded,
In the valley by the river,
In the bosom of the forest,
And the forest's life was in it.
All its mystery and its magic,
All the lightness of the birch tree,
All the toughness of the cedar,
All the larches' supple sinews;
And it floated on the river,
Like a yellow leaf in autumn,
Like a yellow water lily.'"

When Mrs. Cole finished reading the last line, Brandt closed his eyes to sleep. That night he dreamt of the wonderful canoe

that he and Jim had just completed. The next morning bright and early he went to look at it, and found Jim and Tommy already there.

The conversation with Mrs. Cole the night before had given Brandt an idea for a name. He told Jim his plan for a name for the canoe.

"We want an Indian name, of course," cried Brandt; "they are so pretty and appropriate." Jim agreed, and when the canoe was taut and dry, Brandt painted on both sides, at the bow, the name *Minnehaha.*

Just as the little painter was putting the last touches to the name, Pete came along. He threw up his cap and said, "'Urrah for the *Minnehaha!*"

"Hurrah!" cried the others, while Tim barked his pleasure, and Tommy jumped for very joy. That afternoon Pete put the canoe on his broad shoulder and carried it to Muddy River, with the boys following in joyous anticipation. When they reached the stream they launched the canoe, and the minute it touched the water the boys

set up a shout. Pete tried it first to see if it was all right, and it glided along as gracefully as a great swan.

Jim and Brandt tried it, and although it seemed a little awkward at first, after a while they got the art of paddling very well.

"Ithn't me goin' to puddle, too?" cried Tommy, watching the happy paddlers with wistful eyes.

"A course yer are," said Pete, as Brandt got out to let the little fellow have a sail.

He was lifted into the canoe by Pete, who told him "to stay in one place, be quiet, and don't move around."

Tim nearly jumped in after him, but Pete caught the dog just in time. "Bime by, Tim, when you hare used to hit, you can sail, old fellow, but not this trip," said Pete, patting the black head.

Tommy had obeyed directions and kept still for about three minutes.

Then the joy of being in a real canoe with brother Jim paddling about was too much for Tommy to keep to himself. He was simply bubbling over, and had to show

it. "I ithn't afaid to puddle," cried Tommy, jumping up.

In a second the canoe was upside down, and Jim and Tommy in the water. It was not deep at all, and there was no danger, but when Tommy was fished out by Pete, his joy had departed, and he was covered with mud.

"Now look 'ere, Tommy," said Pete, shaking his finger and trying to look stern, "didn't I tell yer to keep as still as er mouse all the time?"

"Yeth," sobbed Tommy; "but it wa' tho tippy."

"Before we go," said Brandt, "let's give three cheers for the *Minnehaha*."

This was done with a will, and then they started home.

Tommy had so much mud in his trousers that he had to walk with his little fat legs very far apart. He looked so funny as he waddled along, Tim walking close beside him, wagging his tail, that the boys roared with laughter.

The *Minnehaha* proved to be a great success. The boys were in it every day,

and soon became very expert with the paddles.

Muddy River was the outlet of a pond. From a good-sized stream it narrowed down to a mere brook that flowed through some low land near the farm. During a dry spell it dwindled down to a narrow strip of yellow water, but after a good fall of rain it became considerably swollen and overflowed its banks. It was perfectly safe until it widened to meet the larger stream away beyond the woods. As it was quite deep there, and Brandt could not swim, the boys never went to that point.

There was a short cut to the woods by way of the shallow stream, and the boys liked to take it. One morning they paddled along lazily in the *Minnehaha* in the direction of the woods. The trees showed glimpses of red and yellow, although the air was soft and balmy as midsummer.

"I'd like to drift along forever in this canoe," said Brandt, dreamily, closing his eyes.

"Wouldn't it be fine to sail down a great river in a distant country!" exclaimed Jim.

"I'll tell you what would be fine," said Brandt, "to be a great explorer! You know," he continued, "like the men who go away up to the north pole. It's all icebergs, some of them never melt, and the men are dressed in furs from head to toe."

"It must be terribly cold up there," cried Jim, "if the snow never melts."

"I have a picture of it in my book," said Brandt; "and you can see seals and other animals on the ice, and great white bears roam over the snow-fields."

"I'd like to go to a warmer country," remarked Jim, "where there were great rivers and islands."

"Then you'd like the Amazon. I think it says in my book that it's the largest river in the world. It's in South America, you know, and it's terribly hot there. All the country is covered with dense forests."

"Look, Brandt," interrupted Jim, "behind those bushes!"

Brandt looked, and saw two bright eyes peering at him.

The boys stopped paddling, and could distinctly see the outline of some animal. All

at once Jim cried, "It's a fox! Let's get out."

They expected the fox to run away when they drew near, but to their surprise they found that he could not.

The poor animal had been caught in a trap which had not been securely fastened, and he had dragged it with him, no one knew how far, to the water's edge. Jim attempted to undo the trap, but the fox snapped at him when he approached, and the boys drew back.

"The poor thing!" cried Brandt; "I wish we could free him."

"Let's bring him home," said Jim, eagerly.

"We can put him into the potato bag," he added, running back to the canoe, where they had used the bag for a cushion.

With a great deal of trouble they got the fox into the bag and started for home. They saw Tommy waiting as they neared the landing-place and they told him to run and get Pete.

When he came, they related their adventure, and Pete ran back to the barn for an

empty berry crate. Master Fox was freed from the trap, put into the crate, and carried to the barn, where Pete examined the crushed paw. He bandaged it and gave the fox some food and water, which the poor animal took ravenously.

In a few days Pete got a long chain and attached it to a collar which he placed on the fox's neck. Then the sick fox was brought outside the barn, and the chain fastened, so that the good fresh air would help him.

Pete fed him every day, and took care of the crushed paw, and after a while the animal seemed to realize that he was among friends, and did not snap or growl. The boys fed him also, and watched Pete when he was doctoring the sore paw. In a short time the fox was scarcely lame at all, and he had grown quite tame. He ate from the boys' hands and let them pat his back.

"What are you going to do with him when he is all better?" asked Mrs. Cole.

"Why can't we keep him all the time?" asked Brandt, quickly. "If we let him go, he might get caught in the trap again."

"Well, dear, the fox is a very wise animal," replied the lady, "and I think he will be very wary of traps after this. But God made him free to roam over the pleasant woods. It is his home, you know, and although he is grateful for your good care, he is probably just as homesick outside the barn, as you would be, in a strange place chained up all the day.

"No, dear," she continued, "I would not keep him. When he is all better, let Pete take off the chain some day, and see what he will do."

One morning, shortly after this conversation, when the boys had given the fox a good breakfast, Pete took off the collar, and the animal was free.

He gave one look at his friends as much as to say, "Thanks," and away he ran over the fields. They all watched him until he was out of sight, and then Pete cried, "That's the last we'll see of Master Fox, and I 'ope 'e'll take keer o' himself."

But strange to say, it was not the last. A few nights after this, Pete saw the fox around the barn, and told the boys

about it. They were very much surprised, and when Brandt told Mrs. Cole, she said, "You see, the fox had not forgotten that his friends were here. God's dumb animals always know who are kind to them."

The boys put some food that evening in the fox's old place, and in the morning it was gone. Pete saw the animal come and take the food and go off again. This was continued for several days, and the boys knew that the fox came back every night.

CHAPTER XI.

JIM'S SECRET.

ONE bright morning Brandt bade good-by to Jim, and went on a visit with Aunt Lee.

"I'll be back in a week," cried Brandt, waving his hand from the carriage, while Pete started to drive to the depot.

Aunt Lee, sitting erect and stately, put up her lorgnette and surveyed Brandt, saying, "Really, my dear, you are getting as freckled as Jim."

"I don't care," cried Brandt, with a boyish smile, "I'm glad of it; I'd like to be just like Jim."

She did not tell the boy that he was looking better than ever before in his short life; that the skin had taken on the healthy color that comes only from fresh air and sunshine; that the eyes sparkled with the happy light of healthy childhood,

and the pensive expression had given place to one of boyish anticipation. A most estimable lady was Miss Elizabeth Carter (familiarly known as Aunt Lee), but she did not possess the heaven-sent instinct of understanding children.

"Now do try to sit still," cried his aunt, impatiently; "but I suppose that is an impossibility."

If she had been a wise woman, it would have come to her that this very restlessness was a most hopeful sign in her little nephew. There had been times when it was not necessary to tell Brandt to sit still. Indeed, there had been weeks when that was all the boy could do.

An active boy is a healthy boy, and it is just as necessary for childhood to be restless and seek constant action as it is for old age to have quiet and repose.

When Brandt had departed Jim paddled up the stream in the *Minnehaha* with Tommy and the dog. They landed and went into the woods a little way. It was then that Jim's secret first occurred to him.

When he returned from the woods, he immediately found Pete, and they had a long private conversation. The next morning Pete and Jim were seen going in the direction of the woods. Pete carried an axe, and Jim had a large bundle in his arms. They were gone a long time, and would not say a word to anybody, when they came back, about their errand.

The next morning this performance was repeated, and everything kept very secret. Every day while Brandt was away Jim made excursions to the woods, and sometimes Pete accompanied him, but Tommy was not allowed to go. "You'll know all about everything, later," said Jim to his inquisitive little brother.

The morning arrived that Brandt was expected home, and Jim drove down with Pete to meet him. When the train steamed along in front of the depot, there was Brandt, smiling and waving his hand.

"I've had a good time," said he, on the drive home; "but I was real lonesome for you, Jim."

"So was I," said Jim. "Oh, didn't I want to see you, though!"

"What have you been doing; anything new?" asked Brandt, suddenly.

"That's telling," answered Pete, who had been smiling to himself during the boys' conversation.

When they reached the house, Brandt cried, "I must see Mrs. Cole first, and then I'll be right out."

"I'll wait," said Jim, giving Pete a knowing look.

Jim put his hands in his pockets, and whistled in his very best style, while Brandt had gone indoors. Pete, instead of driving Dandy into the barn, headed for the road that led to the woods.

In a few minutes Brandt came out of the house, saying, "I wonder where Mrs. Cole is? I can't find her, and nobody in the house knows where she is."

"You can see her by and by," returned Jim; "let's go some place now."

"All right," was the answer. "It's most dinner time, so we won't go far."

"As you haven't seen the *Minnehaha* for

a whole week, suppose we take a short trip," said Jim.

"It's just what I was going to propose," replied Brandt. "I thought of our dear old canoe while I was away, and told my friends about it."

The boys started for the stream, and were soon paddling in the *Minnehaha*. All at once a dog barked over in the woods, and Brandt exclaimed, —

"It sounds just like Tim."

"Let's land and see if it is," replied Jim.

The boys jumped out, secured the canoe, and started to walk in the direction of the sound. They had not gone very far when Tim came running to meet them, wagging his tail and barking joyously.

"What are you doing here all alone, old fellow?" said Brandt, patting Tim on the back. The dog kept running backward and forward, acting in the strangest manner.

Suddenly Brandt exclaimed, "See that flag over there among the trees, I wonder how it got there?"

Jim did not answer, but there was the happiest kind of a smile on the freckled

face as he hurried along. Brandt became excited, and at last started to run. All at once they came in full view of the flag, and then such a jolly surprise as Brandt had!

There was a splendid camp. The top of it was canvas stretched from four pines that grew so as to form a square. The sides were evergreen trees placed closely together, and there was the prettiest rustic entrance of intertwined branches, from the top of which waved the Stars and Stripes. Brandt gazed with delight. He could not speak for a minute, while Jim stood beside him, grinning all over. Brandt was just going to ask a volley of questions, when suddenly Tommy appeared at the entrance with a spoon in his little fist, crying, "Dinner ith ready, ready, ready!" Then he ran back. The boys followed him into the camp, and the next minute Brandt was clasped in the motherly embrace of Mrs. Cole.

Pete began his funny dance, and Jim stood on his head, with feet spread apart, at the entrance. When the general rejoicing was over, Brandt explored every corner of the new camp, and expressed his delight.

Then they all sat down to lunch, which was served on an old wooden table in the centre of the camp. One long bench and a couple of chairs enabled everybody to sit down to dinner. And such a dinner for hungry boys!

If I could only tell you about the sandwiches of fresh bread and butter with thin slices of juicy meat, of green corn that Pete brought over in the cart, sweet as sugar, and piping hot. Then there were mugs of cool milk for thirsty lips, and last but not least, Nora's delicious tarts, piled high in flaky abundance, but fairly melted away before the dinner was over.

"You knew about it all the time, you rogue," said Brandt, going into the good things with the appetite of a healthy boy.

"Of course I did," returned Jim, with a broad smile; "but I wasn't going to tell. It was my secret. Pete and I made it," he continued, "and never told a soul, except Mrs. Cole."

"'Twas Jim thought of it," cried Pete. "I only helped him carry hout the idea."

"We thought we'd have dinner here to-

day, and surprise you," said Mrs. Cole, with her pleasant smile.

"Wasn't that fine!" exclaimed Brandt, beaming on the happy woman, who added, "And I never saw a better or prettier camp."

"It's the best camp I ever saw!" cried Brandt. "Just wait till I tell papa all about it!"

After looking it all over, he said suddenly, "Suppose we give it a name — let's all think of a good one."

"How does Camp Carter strike you?" ventured Jim, but Brandt said quickly, "It sounds all right; but you thought of it and made it, so I don't thing it ought to have my name."

"Since you are such patriotic boys, why not call it Liberty Camp?" suggested Mrs. Cole.

"That's just the name!" cried both boys at once. "Liberty Camp it shall be."

After a most delightful afternoon in and out of the camp, they started for home. They decided to leave the table and the other things, as they intended to come often to their beautiful camp.

Mrs. Cole and Tommy drove home by the road with Pete, while Jim and Brandt walked to the stream and paddled home in the *Minnehaha*.

CHAPTER XII.

A RAINY DAY.

ALMOST every day the boys went to Liberty Camp, and had splendid times there. It was great fun to paddle up the stream in their canoe and know that they had a fine camp all their own to visit.

Brandt had been telling Jim about the wonderful kite-flying he had seen at the beach. "We used to climb Telegraph Hill, on a good windy day," he said, "and watch them fly the kites." Jim thought he could make one such as Brandt described, and one rainy day the boys went to the barn to make kites. They were always sure of Pete's help, and he was pleased to hear about their schemes. Jim had his tool-chest, and they all went to work with a will to make box kites. When they had made one large kite and two smaller ones, they were put care-

fully away until a good day came to try them.

Then the boys sat down and looked out at the rain that seemed to be coming down in sheets.

"Let's each tell a story," said Brandt, "about something that really happened; will you, Jim?"

"I don't know any," replied his friend.

"Will you, Pete?"

"Well, Hi'll see," said Pete. "You go hon, an' we'll be thinkin'."

"I had such a nice sail when I was at Hull, I might tell you about that," said Brandt, thoughtfully.

The others were all attention, and Brandt began: —

"One afternoon a party of us went sailing in a boat called the *Seagull*."

"The what?" asked Jim.

"The *Seagull*," repeated Brandt; "that's the name of a bird that flies over the water, you know. Well, our little boat just flew over the sea that day, because there was a good stiff breeze. Our skipper's name was Captain Ames. He didn't talk at

all, but I guess he knows all about sailing a boat."

"What did he have to do?" asked Jim.

"Oh, he just sat in the stern of the boat and held the tiller to steer, you know. It was great fun to sit and watch the big waves, and sometimes we'd catch the steamer waves, and then what fun!"

"But what are the steamer waves?" asked Jim, who had never been in a sail-boat.

"You know, the big steamers that make trips every day between Boston and the beaches," explained the other. "When they come along through the water it makes a swell, and our boat went over it just like this" (he waved his arm in a snake-like motion).

"That must be great fun!" cried Jim.

"It is," replied Brandt; "and we just seemed to fly over the water. We passed Fort Warren, and right ahead of us was a big white lighthouse. It is Boston Light, you know, and it's built on a rocky island. When we were near enough the captain took us off his ship in a small rowboat,

and we all landed safely. You never saw such a rocky old place, and there were other islands that looked lonely and rocky, near it. Then we all climbed up the lighthouse."

"Was it very high?" asked Jim.

"Yes, it was. We climbed winding stairs, made of iron, until I was so tired that I just had to stop and rest. When we got to the end of the winding stairs there was a ladder to climb. The lighthouse keeper was above, and helped everybody off the ladder."

"Could you see very far when you were up there?" questioned Jim.

"Yes, we could see all over the harbor; I never was up so high before. There was a small platform with an iron railing outside built around the light, and some of our party walked around it. I didn't, because it was so high that it made me dizzy to look down, and Mr. Weld took hold of my hand.

"The glass in the lighthouse is very thick, and everything was shining. They keep it as clean and bright as a new pin."

"And could you see ships away off?" asked Jim, with great interest.

"Yes, indeed; we could look far out to sea, and some of the ships seemed like little white specks. I asked the lighthouse keeper if he was afraid when there was a great storm."

"And what did he say?" asked Jim, eagerly.

"He just smiled," returned Brandt. "Guess he isn't afraid. But he said they had some terrible gales. I asked him if he ever saved a ship, and he said, 'If a ship is dashed against these rocks, it's all up with her, for she goes to pieces before you can think.' But he said they had saved men lots of times."

"Do they swim out to the ship and get the sailors?" asked Jim.

"Oh, no, they don't," was the answer. "They never could swim in such a high sea; the waves are higher than this barn in a wild storm, and then those terrible rocks, you know."

"That's so," said Jim; "they'd be killed."

"Of course they would," replied Brandt. "I'll tell you how they do it. They fire a long line of rope from a cannon out to the ship that's in distress. The sailors on the ship catch the rope and pull it toward them, and by so doing get larger ropes that are attached. These are securely fastened to the ship; then, in response to a signal, the men on the land send out on a pulley a breeches buoy. It looks just like my air cushion, only there are two places to put your feet through. Well, a sailor on the wrecked ship gets into the buoy as quick as a flash, and the life-savers on land pull on the ropes again, and draw him over the water as fast as they can, until he's safe."

"It's wonderful!" cried Jim; "and I suppose they can take off a whole crew that way?"

"Yes," said Brandt; "but sometimes a poor sailor is drowned, in spite of all.

"When we climbed down the winding stairs again and were outside the lighthouse we saw the neat cottages where the keepers live. And outside the door of one

of the cottages we saw a cunning little baby in a little cart. It didn't seem to mind living on a lonely, rocky island. It just put its little fists together and chuckled. Then we were rowed to our ship, and had a fine sail home."

"What a good time you must have had!" exclaimed Jim.

"Did yer see any big whales?" asked Tommy, who had been drinking in every word that fell from Brandt's lips.

"No, Tommy, no whales," said Brandt, "because they don't come in that part of the ocean."

"There's a picture of a big whale in Jim's reader, an' it's right on the ocean, too," cried Tommy.

"Now, Jim, it's your turn to tell a story," said Brandt.

"I'm afraid I don't know any," said Jim, trying to think of one that really happened.

"Why don't you tell about me," cried Tommy, "the day I fell into the —"

But before he could finish, Jim put his hand gently over the little fellow's mouth.

"Sure enough," said Jim, "I'll tell you about that.

"Well, it all happened in this way," he began. "I went haying that day with father and Bill Jones. We went to the meadow that is near Day's Grove, so you see we were quite a distance from the house.

"I had taken Tim with me, and we helped father all we could."

"What did you do?" asked Brandt.

"I was in the cart, and whenever father and Bill would throw in a lot of hay on their pitchforks, I'd just jump on it, to keep it down."

"That must be fun!" exclaimed Brandt.

"It is," was the answer; "because sometimes they would throw the hay right on top of me, and Tim would bark, and we'd both get knocked over.

"When the cart was piled away up high, we started for home. Tim and I were lying on top of the load, and it was fine.

"But when we came near the house, my mother ran to meet us. She was crying, and told us that Tommy was lost. She

had been searching for him hours, but there was no sign of him."

"I wath in the —" interrupted Tommy; but before he could finish, Jim put his hand over the eager little mouth.

"Let me tell it, Tommy, dear," said Jim.

"I told mother that I'd surely find him, and me and Tim started down the road, while father and Bill took the woods.

"I couldn't see a trace of him, and I was feeling pretty bad, too, thinking of my little brother," continued Jim, lovingly, while Tommy snuggled closer to his side, and grinned at each listener in turn.

"And I said to Tim, 'Where is he, Tim? find him, find him!'"

At this point, Tim, who had been sitting quietly, following the story in a dog's most intelligent manner, gave a little bark.

"It seemed," Jim went on, "as if Tim knew just what was the matter.

"He ran along, smelling everything, acting in the queerest manner.

"All at once we came to an old shed

that used to stand in the field a short distance from the henhouses. Tim ran into the shed and came out, barking like everything.

"I went in, but of course it was empty, and I said, 'Come, Tim, he isn't there.'

"I started to walk along, but Tim would not follow me. He stood before the old shed, barking terribly. 'Come, come, Tim,' I called again, but he wouldn't stir. I watched him for a second, and all at once he went to the side of the shed, and sniffed and wagged his tail. I went to him, and there was a little hole that he was trying to put his nose into. It was so small that I never thought of anybody's getting into it. It seemed as if Tim tried to talk to me. He stood back from that hole, and barked and cried. I got down on my face and hands, and tried to look down the hole; well, what do you think, I heard a little moan."

"It wath me, me!" shouted Tommy, at the top of his voice. "I fell in."

"You little rogue," said Jim, "you just crept into it.

"If I didn't hurry! It was a rotten old shed, with big cracks in the floor, and I just pulled up some boards and found Tommy.

"He was as white as a sheet when I pulled him out. I guess he was 'most dead. I carried him out and laid him on the grass, and Tim licked his face and gave little barks of joy."

"Good old Tim!" cried Brandt, putting his arm around the shaggy black neck; "only for you they'd never have found Tommy."

"That's so," remarked Jim, while Tim, who had been trying to be polite during these compliments by simply whacking his tail on the floor, suddenly gave a jump, and barked to his heart's content.

"An' the black hen!" shouted Tommy.

"Oh, yes," said Jim, "I forgot about her. When Tommy was able to speak, he told us that he had followed the black hen, and when he saw her going under the shed he thought he would go too.

"Then father pulled down the old shed, and we found a whole nest of lovely brown

eggs. That old hen used to go under the shed to lay her eggs."

"That was a good story," said Brandt; "and now, Pete, it's your turn."

"Do you know what time it is?" remarked Pete, taking out his watch. "It's time you boys were thinking about supper."

"As late as that!" exclaimed Brandt; "what a short afternoon it has been."

"But we would like to hear your story," said Jim.

"I'll tell it some hother time," said Pete, and the boys left the barn to have supper.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIBERTY CAMP.

For two or three days it was too damp to go to the camp, but after a spell of sunshine everything was all dry again, and one pleasant morning the boys decided to go. They paddled up the stream in the *Minnehaha,* and landed in their old place. As they walked along in the woods, they saw smoke curling up a short distance ahead.

"I wonder what makes that smoke?" cried Brandt.

"I hope Liberty Camp isn't on fire," said Jim; "that would be terrible."

The boys hurried along, and suddenly could hear voices as they went.

"Some one is in our camp," said Jim, excitedly, and stopped to listen.

"Let's see who it is," whispered Brandt; "we'll creep along easy behind the bushes and catch them."

Cautiously, their hearts beating faster with every step, the boys stepped behind trees and bushes. When they came in sight of the camp, a strange picture presented itself.

There was a family of gypsies taking their ease as comfortable as possible. An old wagon with three handsome black horses tied to the back of it stood on the right of their camp, while on the left was a large tent. Some old quilts were scattered on the ground, and a few pieces of colored clothes hung from the bushes. The smoke came from a fire partly out, and near it, stretched at full length, was a dark-skinned man with an old felt hat pulled over his eyes. Two plump gypsy women, one of them nursing a baby, were sitting on the ground chatting together.

As the boys watched from behind the bushes, a lad about their own age came out of Liberty Camp, followed by a young girl, with a bright kerchief on her neck.

"He's taken down our flag," whispered Brandt, in a very indignant voice. "I wonder where it is."

Jim was too intently watching the picture to answer.

"Let's go and ask them for it," said Jim, after a pause.

"Do you think they'd touch us?" asked Brandt.

"Oh, no," was the answer; "I've seen gypsies around here before."

"I never saw them," returned Brandt, who was a little timid, as he watched the novel sight. "We'll go back and tell Pete," he whispered; and the boys stole softly away until they reached the canoe, when they hurriedly paddled for home.

They were very much excited, and when they landed, ran all the way to the barn to tell Pete, and then found Mrs. Cole to inform her of the invasion of Liberty Camp by the gypsies.

"I know they'll take our cups and things," Brandt cried, "and won't it be terrible if anything happens to the flag!"

He felt so badly he was almost ready to cry with disappointment. The idea of gypsies taking possession of their beautiful camp!

Mrs. Cole talked with Brandt, and said she thought everything would be all right. Then she sent him for Jim. When Jim appeared she gave him a large basket, and told him to ask his father to fill it with corn. Jim helped his father gather the ripe ears, and soon returned with his basket filled.

Mrs. Cole put a nice little pat of fresh butter into the basket, saying, "Now, boys, I want you to take this basket to the gypsies, and don't forget, Brandt, what I told you."

Pete accompanied the boys into the woods, but did not approach the camp with them; instead, he waited near a path.

When Brandt and Jim came in sight of the gypsy camp, one of the women spied them.

She came forward to meet them, saying, "Good mornin', leetle boys."

The boys took off their hats and greeted the woman like the little gentlemen they were, and in another minute the whole gypsy family surrounded them. "If you please, ma'am," said Brandt, "here is a

present of some corn and some fresh butter from the farm, and you can send over every evening for milk, to the brown cottage."

There was a perfect babble of voices when Brandt had stated his errand, and all he could see around him was black eyes and rows of white teeth.

"Thankee, thankee," said the woman, over and over again, taking the basket from Brandt, who cast furtive glances around, especially at Liberty Camp.

"And if you please, ma'am," said Brandt, when she returned the empty basket, "would you be careful of Liberty Camp, and give me my flag?"

The girl with the bright kerchief, who had been listening attentively, darted into the tent and returned with the flag.

"Thank you," said Brandt, turning to go, while the whole gypsy family nodded and smiled their gratitude to the boys.

Jim carried the basket and Brandt waved the precious flag over his shoulder. In a few minutes they were joined by Pete, and the trio started home.

"I'm glad we've got our dear old flag safe and sound," said Jim. Brandt was silent for a while, then he suddenly said, "I wonder how they are going to cook that corn."

"They can do that easy enough," replied Jim, "I've watched them many a time. They build a fire of twigs and branches and have a big kettle swung from three poles that meet at the top. The fire is right under the pot, and they can cook anything, you know."

"I wonder how long they'll stay," said Pete.

"They never stay very long," answered Jim, "not more than two or three days; my father knows all about them," he continued.

Brandt wanted to pay another visit to the gypsy camp, but Mrs. Cole thought that he had better not go again.

A few days after this, Pete saw the gypsies on the village road, and when the boys heard this they were very anxious to visit their camp and see how the gypsies had left it.

They got into the canoe and started for

the woods, and Pete said that perhaps he would join them by and by.

When they got out of the canoe they ran all the way to the camp, and were glad to find that, outside at least, Liberty Camp looked the same. Not quite so clean, perhaps, as the ground was strewn here and there with some of the gypsy belongings. But that was something they could clean up in a very short time.

They entered the camp, and were still more pleased to find the bench and chairs in their old places.

On the table in the centre of the tent was a very handsome basket, with a good-sized package in brown paper on top of it.

The boys gazed curiously at it, and Jim said, "They make those baskets to sell. I wonder how they came to leave it here."

Just then Brandt caught sight of a small piece of paper folded in the basket, and he opened it, and read, "Fer the little cove wot brung the korn an the ladis."

The boys opened their eyes in amazement. "Why, it's a present for you, Brandt," ex-

claimed Jim; "open the package quick," he added, "and see what it is."

Brandt untied the package, and found a handsome bow and arrow.

Jim fairly jumped with delight while Brandt looked at his unexpected gift. In the bottom of the basket was a beautiful beaded purse.

"Well, if this isn't a surprise!" cried Brandt, and once more he read the words on the paper. "Fer the little cove wot brung the korn an the ladis." "I guess the gypsies never go to school," said Brandt, studying the scrawl, "or they would spell better than that."

"Let's go home and show the present," said Jim, eagerly; and the two boys fairly flew over the ground. They met Pete on the way, and told him with breathless enthusiasm what they had found.

When Mrs. Cole heard about it she was very much pleased.

"I think they meant the basket and purse for you," said Brandt.

"Perhaps they did," replied the good lady, smiling, "so I will take the purse;

but they had some of your mother's nice butter," she continued, turning to Jim, "so you may take her the basket."

"Thank you," said Jim, and he ran across the field with the handsome present for his mother, every now and then holding up the basket to get a whiff of its fragrant odor.

"What a pleasant time we've had after all," remarked Brandt that night to Mrs. Cole, just before bedtime.

"Do you remember," he added, "I thought the gypsies were going to be horrid, didn't you?"

"They might have been disagreeable," replied Mrs. Cole, "and I am very glad they were not."

"You know I was angry with them at first," cried the boy, "when I saw them in our camp; and when they had taken down our flag I just wanted to do something mean to them."

"Yes, dear," replied his friend; "but, instead, you showed your good will to them and they have shown theirs to you. When you are grown up, my dear," con-

tinued the good woman, "you will read some beautiful truths in one of the best books ever written. Among them you will find this line: —

"'Kindness nobler ever than revenge.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD NEWS.

"LET us have some target practice this afternoon," said Brandt; "I want to make up my score."

"Just what I want to do," replied Jim, and the boys got their bows and began the shooting. When Brandt had received the handsome little bow and arrow from the gypsies, it did not take Jim very long to make one like it for himself. Brandt painted a bull's-eye on the side of the barn, and the boys tried their skill at hitting it every day. After a while it grew so very interesting that Brandt decided to keep a score. He wrote his name and that of his companion in a book. Every time one of them hit the bull's-eye Brandt put a star beside the name in the book, and at the end of the week they counted the score. Sometimes Brandt was ahead and at other

times it was Jim; but the boys had lots of fun over it and became very good marksmen.

In the midst of their target practice a stiff wind came up, and Jim said, "This is just the day we want for our kites."

"That's so," replied Brandt. "Let us stop the shooting and try them. I wish we had a good high hill," he continued.

They talked it over with Pete, and he said he would drive them to a certain hill which was fairly high on his way to the post-office.

The boys got out their box kites, and when Pete was ready they started. Tommy promised to be good, and they took him along to see the fun.

After a short drive the hill was reached, and while the boys climbed the hill, Pete drove off to the post-office. They decided to try the large kite first.

They had a good deal of trouble to get it started, but after a few trials it began to rise slowly. It was going along beautifully when all at once the string broke. It wobbled in the air for a moment and then

came tumbling down. In the descent the kite got entangled in a tree and torn so the boys knew it would be useless to try it again. They had better success with the second one. It was much smaller than the first, and after a while it rose in the air like a great bird. It wavered a minute and seemed to tip a little, and then went up higher and higher. The boys had yards and yards of string, and kept letting it out faster and faster. The kite looked very pretty away up in the air, and the boys were delighted. When it was successfully launched on its way Brandt took the string and Jim tried the other kite. In a short time he had it in the air almost as high as Brandt's.

"Isn't my kite high?" cried Brandt, with enthusiasm; "it's just as high as the kites I saw at Hull."

"My kite is higher than the lighthouse, is'nt it?" asked Jim.

"Oh, yes," was the answer, "a great deal higher."

"Just think of going up in a balloon," said Brandt; "that must be fun. But

it's terrible dangerous," he continued, "Mrs. Cole says so."

"Have you let out all your string yet?" asked Jim.

"Yes," said Brandt; "I wish I had yards more."

"We'll try them again," remarked Jim, "and we'll just double the length of our string."

"Why don't your kite go right up to the sky?" asked Tommy, who had been keeping very quiet.

"Because I haven't any more string," said Jim, smiling.

"And ith you had lots more string, would it keep goin' higher an' higher?"

"That's just what it would do," replied Brandt.

"Well, then, it would go to heaven, I guess," said Tommy.

This made the boys laugh; but Tommy continued gravely, "My muzzer says heaven ith up there."

Just then Jim's kite took a sudden turn, and began to come down a little. He ran with it, and it rose higher than ever.

"I think kite-flying is lots of fun," he cried, "and I'm coming to-morrow with string enough to send it to China."

"But China is down," said Brandt; "I read once that if you could go right through the earth, you would come to China on the other side."

"And did you know that the Chinese are very fond of kite-flying?"

"No," was the answer, "never heard of it."

"They make kites in different sizes and odd shapes, and on certain days everybody, old and young, goes out to fly the kites."

Suddenly Pete appeared on the side of the hill, and waved a letter over his head. He came up and watched the progress of the kites until they decided to start for home. They drew in the string and lowered the kites, and in a few minutes were driving behind Dandy on the way to the farm.

"Have you forgotten the letter?" asked Pete, taking it out of his pocket.

"Oh, is it for me?" exclaimed Brandt.

All at once, as he read it, he uttered a shout of joy.

"Just listen to this!" cried Brandt:—

"MY DEAR BRANDT: I have some good news for you. Your tandem has been found. It needed a little cleaning, so I sent it to the factory for a thorough renovating, and you will have it in a few days. How it was found is a long story. That I will tell you later, but you will be pleased to know that your friend, Mr. Bingham, put us on the right track. Lots of love from

"COUSIN DICK."

The boys were delighted at the good news, and could talk of nothing else all the way home. That evening they talked over the tandem until it was time to go to bed, and I'm afraid neither one of them slept very well that night thinking of it. I know that Brandt did not, because the next morning at breakfast he told Mrs. Cole he had had a wonderful dream the night before about his tandem.

"I dreamt I was in China," said the boy, "flying kites with Jim, when suddenly a great, tall Chinaman appeared before us on

a bicycle. He dismounted, and after watching us a few minutes, said, 'Have you found your tandem?' I remember just as well of saying, 'Our tandem is lost.' Then the Chinaman said, 'Come with me, and I'll show you where it is.' Now the queerest thing happened. He mounted the tandem, and told me to stand behind him and hold on to his cue. The next minute I was wheeling through space holding on to the Chinaman's pig-tail.

"We went like the wind, and I didn't know what had become of Jim. Suddenly the Chinaman stopped on the highest mountain in the world. It was so high that my head was in the clouds.

"'Now let go my cue, get on your tandem, and fly.'

"He disappeared through the air, and I stood in the dream and watched the pig-tail flying behind him. Then I looked at my side, and there was my tandem. I mounted it, and in another second was coasting down the highest mountain in the world, going so fast that I had to shut my eyes. When I reached the base of the

mountain, there stood Jim waiting for me. Then I woke up."

Mrs. Cole laughed merrily at Brandt's wild dream, and thought he must have had a bad nightmare.

All morning long, the boys waited for the tandem to come, but it did not reach the house until the afternoon.

When it was finally set down in front of the two happy boys, they examined it well, and found that it was the same beautiful tandem.

Pete turned it upside down and they read the number, 128697.

"I'll never forget those figures," said Jim.

Of course the boys had to take a short spin over the roads, just to see if the wheel could go as well as ever.

They found that it was just as light and easy as before, and took a ride on it.

When they returned to the house, they learned that Mrs. Lane and Marjorie had been over to spend the afternoon, and invited our two little heroes to spend the following afternoon at the Maples.

CHAPTER XV.

DETECTIVE WORK.

As Brandt did not see Cousin Dick for several weeks, I am going to tell you just how the tandem was found.

Mr. Bingham, who, you remember, was the stout, pleasant-faced gentleman that had sent the boys safely home on the day their tandem was stolen, had an office boy. The boy's name was Joseph Nudd, but as all his friends called him "Puds," I shall have to do the same.

One morning, about two weeks after Puds had returned from his vacation, he was not performing his office devotions in the usual manner. Instead of standing on his head and picking up the scraps of paper from the floor with his teeth, he was actually on his knees using his hands. Stranger still, instead of whiling away the early hours by

balancing the feather duster on his nose, he was trying to take down a small cobweb over the door. But the most remarkable change of all was the fact that when he met Hodge's boy (of Hodge and Dodge, Lawyers, with an office upstairs), Puds gave him a sickly grin instead of a few punches in the solar plexus. Surely there was something wrong with Puds.

In the course of the day Mr. Bingham noticed this remarkable change.

"He can't be well," said that individual to himself; "he's too quiet," and he watched Puds sitting on the very edge of a chair.

"Here, Puds," said his employer, cheerfully, "mail these letters for me."

"Yes, sir," answered Puds, rising slowly.

"What's the matter?" asked Mr. Bingham, who noticed that the boy walked lame.

"Nawthin', sir; I got an upper cut in de hip an it's left me lame, dat's all, sir," replied Puds, bashfully.

"Well, well," said his employer, briskly, "how did that happen?"

"Dere was a spill in de road an' we was knocked under."

"Oh, I see, you fell from a bicycle?"

"Tandem, sir," said Puds, shortly.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the other; "have you a tandem?"

"Naw, sir, but me chum Billy de Buck has."

"Is that so?" remarked Mr. Bingham, looking out of the window in an absent sort of way; "has he had it long?"

"Naw', sir, it's a second-hander, he only bought it las' week."

"I wonder where he bought it?" asked his employer, carelessly.

"I don' knaw, sir, but I tink it was from a feller wot goes on de ferry."

Mr. Bingham mused awhile when Puds had gone, and recalled the episode of the two little lads and their tandem.

He knew Puds was not a bad boy by any means. For a lad brought up in the crowded streets of the poorest part of the city, he had many good qualities that one would hardly expect to find.

Mr. Bingham had found the boy bright

and honest, in spite of the fact that he was constantly up to some mischief, harmless enough, it is true. Puds had a certain straightforward manliness that appealed to his good-natured employer. A man of finer feelings would have taken pains to correct the language of the boy, but as it was a source of amusement to John Bingham, he never did.

During the day a detective sent by Cousin Dick called to see Mr. Bingham, and wrote down several things in his note-book.

He asked Puds where his chum lived and decided to pay Billy a visit. The detective found Billy in bed as a result of the fall from the tandem, and learned that it had been disposed of that morning to a Jake Kadardis, a next-door neighbor.

"Now, where did you get the tandem, Billy?" asked the detective.

"I bought it off Smithy," replied Billy, without any hesitation.

"How much did you give for it?" asked the other.

"I give $2.47 wot I had saved up, me boxin' gloves, an' a pair o' me pumps."

Billy had the reputation in the neighborhood of being quite a dancer.

"Do you remember the number of the tandem?" said the officer.

"Naw, sir, an' take dis straight," continued Billy: "I wouldn't ride one of dem tings again fer nawthin', see?"

"All right," said the detective; "and now just tell me all you know about Smithy."

"Well, yer see, he lives acrost de ferry in East Boston; I don't know de street. An' say! he don't always do tings on the level, see? He took me in bad on dat tandem, see?"

"I see," answered the other; and having learned all there was to know, he left Billy with his lame feet and his evident disgust with all the tandems in existence.

The next thing was to find Smithy's house, which was accomplished with no little difficulty. Smithy was not at home, but his mother was; and she declared that he had never owned a tandem in his life. She was stronger than that even in the defence of her offspring. She was sure that Smithy had never even seen one in his life,

and he was "that innocent," that he would not know one if he *did* see it. Smithy was not to be found that day nor for several others. After a great deal of trouble the detective finally succeeded in locating this slippery youth.

At first he was stout in his denial of everything pertaining to the tandem; but after a very important talk with the officer, he confessed that he had taken it, giving day, date, and number of the wheel.

Now the only thing to be done was to return to Jake Kadardis and get the tandem; but this was not quite so easy as it seemed.

Jake had bought it for three dollars. He had a clothing store out of town, and he and his brother could use the tandem going back and forth to the store. It was rather small, to be sure, but so was Jake, and as he could save carfare by using the wheel, was very well pleased with his bargain. But Jake was a shrewd buyer. He felt that all was not right in regard to the handsome tandem for which he had paid but three dollars, so he questioned Billy

when he bought it, with this result, that he made quite a few changes in the appearance of the wheel. In fact, had you seen it painted up, you would never have recognized it for the tandem that belonged to the boy at Sunnyside Farm.

In the meantime, while the officer was trying to locate Smithy, Billy told Jake one night about the detective coming and asking all the questions.

When Jake heard this he uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Ain'd id shust too bad!" cried Jake, rolling his eyes upward. "My brodder an' I, we run inter anodder dandem, an' ours was shust smashed der bieces."

"Come off," said Billy; "tell another."

"It's drue, I dell yer," moaned Jake; "we haf no dandem no more; I nefer veel so bad about anyting," and he raised his hands as if the recollection of it all was too painful for words.

Billy could hardly believe it at first; but when Jake and his brother continued to come and go without the wheel, Billy thought Jake's story was true, especially

as he constantly referred "to dad derrible smash-up on de road."

But when the detective reappeared on the scene, he firmly refused to believe the story. In vain Jake protested that it was gone, and even offered to show the broken pieces of the tandem. The officer shook his head, and Jake's denial was all to no purpose.

"You know where that wheel is, and you must produce it at once," declared the officer.

"I gif you my wort, I show you two of dose spokes and a biece of dat rubber tire.'

"No, you won't," said the detective, quickly; "you'll show me the whole business."

"But, my friendt," protested Jake, "how can I do dat, when bart of it is in de road for all wot I know, and bart of it is in de store broken der bieces, I dell yer."

"Very well," answered the officer, "if you won't give it up, we won't waste any more words about it. But remember, that the tandem was stolen property, and you received it. You are responsible, and if

you cannot produce the wheel, you will have to pay for its real value. In the end it will cost you a great deal more than the wheel is worth, besides no end of trouble." The detective said a great many other things, and gave a little evidence that rather startled Jake. In the end, Jake Kadardis weakened, and said he could get the wheel or rather "one shust like it."

But where do you suppose it was?

On a little excursion in New York with Jake's uncle.

It was finally discovered and sent to the factory for a thorough cleansing and renovating, and thence on its way to the two little lads who had mourned it as lost.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PONY RACE.

"GIVE this note to Marjorie's mother," said Mrs Cole, on the afternoon that they had been invited to The Maples.

Brandt put it carefully in his pocket, and in a few minutes was wheeling over the road on the tandem behind Jim. When the boys reached the house they were greeted by the good people who met them at the door, and little Marjorie came out and shyly bade them welcome.

She was dressed in a white frock, with knots of ribbon on her shoulders that matched the blue of her eyes. Her pretty brown curls were tied back with blue bows, and altogether she was a most winsome little maid.

"I am sorry Mrs. Cole couldn't come," said the pleasant hostess when she had read the note.

"Suppose you take the boys and show them your pets first," said Mr. Lane; and Marjorie smilingly asked the boys if they would like to see them. Of course they did, and followed the little girl down the long walk to the barnyard. Some peacocks were strutting around showing their beautiful feathers, and Marjorie called their attention to a very large one.

"That is King William," said the little girl; "papa got him first, and I think he is handsomer than all the others; don't you?"

"He's a beauty," replied Brandt, gallantly; "but I think that small one has the prettiest tail."

"What fine feathers they have!" exclaimed Jim.

"Yes, and sometimes people use their feathers to trim hats," answered Marjorie. "But I wouldn't wear any in *my* hat."

"Why?" asked both boys at once.

"Because I belong to the Band of Mercy, — I'll show you my badge, — and we mustn't have the poor birds slaughtered to wear their feathers. It's very cruel,"

she continued. "Our teacher told us all about it. Don't you ever wear any — I mean don't you ever hurt any — will you?"

The boys declared that they had never thought of it, and the little maid went on, "I shall never wear any birds' feathers, never!"

The boys were silent for a long time. They were not old enough to realize Marjorie's sacrifice, neither was Marjorie.

"Now," said the girl, when they had admired the peacocks, "I'll show you my rabbits." The boys were delighted with the lively bunnies, especially if they came to Marjorie when she called them. The next thing they saw was a dear little bossy calf that put a cold nose into the boys' hands, and looked at them with great, soft eyes.

Brandt was particularly fond of the calf, and said he would like to have one.

"I like my bossy very much," said the little girl, "and she is growing larger every day."

Then there was a lamb that came frisking up and stood close beside Marjorie.

"You will have to excuse lammie to-day," said Marjorie, putting her arm around the lamb's neck, "because he really looks very dirty. He needs a good bath, and John will give him one by and by."

Jim had been rather quiet thus far in the proceedings, but when they came to a great parrot in a cage, he laughed merrily.

"Hello, Polly!" said Marjorie, poking her finger into the cage.

"Hello, hello, hello, hello!" cried the parrot.

Jim had never been so near a parrot before, and he was very much amused.

"Polly want a cracker?" asked Brandt.

"Shut up," answered Polly. This made the boys laugh, but Marjorie said, "You naughty birdie, to be so impolite."

"Light, light, hello boy, hello boy, hello!"

The visitors walked off, and Jim said, "Good-by, Polly."

"Good-by, good-by, be good," answered Polly.

"I suppose you wouldn't care to see any dolls, would you?" asked Marjorie, in a very hopeful voice.

Jim blushed and turned his head away, while a smile stole around the corners of his mouth. Brandt felt that he must answer, and the truth should be told.

"I don't think we'd care for the dolls, thank you," said Brandt, in his best manner; and then, as he saw the shade of disappointment pass over the little girl's face, added, "Jim and I, we—well, we don't, er, get on very well with dolls, you see."

"Of course I know boys don't play with dolls," said Marjorie, wisely; "but then my dolls are different, they are so well brought up, you know — my Ellen Terry is perfectly beautiful, and can say 'papa' and 'mamma.'"

Jim's face still wore the grin, but the very mention of dolls made him uncomfortable, and Brandt was afraid she was going to ask them to play dolls. He did not know what to say. He felt very much relieved when Mr. Lane appeared, and asked them how they enjoyed the pets.

"Did you show the boys your ponies?" asked Mr. Lane.

"Not yet," replied the little girl; "I thought I would leave them for the last."

"Suppose we go now and have a look at them," said her father, and he walked beside Jim to the stable.

"Are you quite sure you wouldn't like to see Ellen Terry?" whispered Marjorie in Brandt's ear, as they started for the barn.

"Well, let's go and see the ponies now," replied the boy, quickly.

I am afraid Brandt was a born diplomatist. He did not wish to offend the little lady by refusing to see her dolls, and he added gracefully, but so low that Jim could not hear him, "I'm sure your dolls must be fine."

But they were in the barn and standing before two of the finest ponies in the country.

The boys were delighted, and each one had a strong desire in his heart to mount a pony and ride around.

Jim was so eager to jump on the back of one that he could not stand still. He rested first on one foot and then on the other. He walked around the handsome little animals and stroked their backs.

"When my son was here," said Mr.

Lane, "he and a friend used to ride the ponies bareback. If we had some saddles, you boys might try them."

"If you please, sir," said Jim, quickly, "we can ride without saddles."

"Yes," said Brandt, full of enthusiasm. "Pete lets us ride on Dandy and Sport almost every day."

"Then we'll get the bridles," said Mr. Lane, smiling, "and you shall ride them at once."

In a moment the ponies were all ready, and Brandt and Jim swung themselves into their seats as gracefully as a cowboy.

They trotted down the yard and out into the road a short distance, their cheeks flushing with excitement and pleasure.

Then they trotted back.

"That was first-rate," said Mr. Lane; "I see you boys know how to ride."

Brandt and Jim were loathe to get off the ponies, and they trotted around the yard, enjoying it thoroughly.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Mr. Lane. "Come out in the back road and try a race."

Nothing could have pleased the boys better; and they followed their friend and his little daughter out to a private road back of the house.

"I hope Pet wins!" cried Marjorie.

"And I bet on Spotty," said Mr. Lane, with a laugh.

Brandt was riding Pet, while Jim, in all his boyish pride, was mounted on Spotty.

"Now," said Mr. Lane, when they were in the road, "you see that birch tree away down the road near the fence — well, I'll start you here, and whoever reaches there first wins the race."

The ponies stood head to head and their owner said, "I'll count five and then you go."

Each rider's heart began to beat faster, as Mr. Lane counted slowly, one — two — three — four — five, and away went the ponies, dashing down the road for all they were worth, the boys urging them on, and Jim bending over Spotty's neck like a professional jockey.

"Pet's ahead," cried Marjorie, clapping her hands.

Away went the ponies.

"Never," said Mr. Lane, his eyes sparkling, "it's Spotty."

"Hurrah there," he shouted, "keep it up!"

On and on dashed the ponies. Now it was Pet leading, and again it was Spotty with furious pace. Both boys were bareheaded, their hats in the dust of the road. "Go it, go it!" shouted Mr. Lane, as they gave one final spurt, and Spotty dashed proudly by the birch tree with Pet following a length behind.

"You've won, Jim," said Brandt, when he recovered from the recent excitement.

Jim's face beamed, and they turned their ponies and cantered leisurely back.

"Well done!" said Mr. Lane, when they rode up; "I congratulate you, Jim, and I never saw a better pony race."

The little animals seemed to enjoy it as much as the boys. They whinnied with glee, and Spotty rubbed his nose against Jim's shoulder as the boy stood beside the winning pony.

"Good old Spotty," said Jim, stroking

the affectionate little pony, "you're a winner all right."

"Pet's a fine pony too," cried Brandt, loyal to the one that he had ridden, "and perhaps he'll win the next time." Brandt rubbed Pet's face, who whinnied as much as to say, "I'll try."

Then the boys went to the house with Marjorie, where Mrs. Lane had a most tempting spread for the visitors.

They all sat down and enjoyed themselves thoroughly, talking and laughing over the pony race.

After the lunch Mr. Lane and his wife sat on the piazza and watched Majorie and her friends playing croquet on the lawn until it was time for the boys to start for home.

When they were all ready the tandem was brought out, and the boys thanked their friends for the pleasant afternoon they had spent at The Maples.

While they were talking, Marjorie had slipped unnoticed into the house, and just as the boys were mounting the tandem she appeared at the door with a great wax doll in her arms.

"It's Ellen Terry," she cried, dimpling all over. The boys raised their hats to the little maid and her doll, and were soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XVII.

SCHOOL DAYS.

It was a beautiful day in the middle of September. The trees had put on their bright, autumn colors, and the air was clear and invigorating.

"Just think," said Jim, "this is the last day of vacation!"

"Why, so it is," replied Brandt; "your school opens to-morrow."

"I hate to go back," observed Jim, "because you're here."

"I shall be terribly lonesome, I suppose," said Brandt; "but then, it can't be helped. I'm not to begin my studies until the middle of the winter, Dr. Faire said," continued the boy; "but I wish I was going with you."

"I wouldn't mind going back, if you were coming," cried Jim.

"Well, everybody ought to go to school,"

returned his friend. "Mrs. Cole says it's a splendid thing to do. We ought to get all the knowledge we can. It makes you more useful to yourself and other people, when you grow up, you know. She told me one day how a man might lose everything almost,—his friends, position, and money,—but no one could take away his education; and the knowledge that he possessed would be a source of help and pleasure to him when everything else was gone."

"I know that is all true," said Jim, a little reluctantly, "but," he added quickly, "we'll have Saturdays, and every day after school together."

"You know when I first came," observed Brandt, "you were going to school."

"That's so," replied Jim; "and when my chores were done, we had lots of time to play."

The last day of vacation was spent in visiting all their treasures and favorite spots.

They went to Liberty Camp on the tandem, and rested in their favorite old place,

making plans for the future. And the wonderful plans two boys can make, and the joy of telling, only a boy knows!

Brandt declared he would travel all over the world and see the beautiful places that he had read and heard about. He would sail in a great ship, and Jim would be the captain. Brave little knights, *sans peur et sans reproche.* Jim, with his tool-chest (to the mind of a boy all things are possible), was going to build great houses and ships and beautiful boats.

"Oh, the joy of the future, grown-up time!" thought the two little lads, with their fairy plans. Ah! Jim and Brandt, happy little dreamers, it is the boyhood time that is the sweetest. And if it were possible to realize all the wonderful delights that you have dreamed of in the happy after-time, you would still look back and say, "Oh, to be a boy again!"

The next morning, bright and early, two happy boys mounted a tandem, and took the road for the village school. If there was a lingering regret in Jim's heart, it did not show itself in his outward appear-

ance, at least. His clothes were fresh and clean. A large plaid tie adorned the brown neck, and his shoes were polished till they shone. The torn straw hat that he had revelled in during the summer days had given place to a small cap that rested jauntily on the thick, red-brown hair.

Jim's face, which had been scrubbed with yellow soap, was so resplendent that each little brown freckle stood out clearly on the shiny surface. A spotless handkerchief was folded neatly, and peered a few inches above the pocket of the gingham blouse, while under his arm was a well-thumbed copy of the Franklin Reader.

After a short time the tandem approached the little weather-beaten schoolhouse, with its storm porch in evidence, winter and summer. A group of boys and girls, all ages and sizes, stood around and gave our boys many admiring glances. At first some of them held aloof, a little bashful in Brandt's presence; but after a while their curiosity got the better of their shy feelings, and they pressed around the tandem, exchanging opinions about it.

Jim, with boyish pride, was telling them about it, when suddenly somebody cried, "Teacher's comin'." In another minute Brandt beheld a smiling young woman in a pink shirt-waist, hemmed in on all sides by a merry, chattering throng.

"Well, I declare," said the teacher, approaching, "how well you look, children! "Rosy is fatter than ever, and how tall Willy Lee has grown! As for you, Tiny Tibbetts" (a great overgrown lad who towered over the teacher), "we shall have to get a nice new desk, I'm sure. And there is Jim Mullen, honest Jim, stronger than ever." She had a pleasant word for everybody, and each pupil thus addressed beamed with pleasure, especially Tiny Tibbetts, who hung back, shuffling his great feet and casting sidelong glances at a small girl near him.

The teacher opened the door, and the troop followed in. There was a merry babble of voices for a few minutes, and then all was still — school had begun. Brandt stood beside his tandem for a short time, almost wishing he belonged to

the little band, then he mounted and started for home. The next morning when Jim went to school he had four small flags for his teacher that Brant had sent.

One Saturday, several weeks later, the boys went nutting to a place called Day's Grove.

Pete accompanied them, and each one was provided with something to hold the nuts. Jim had a pillow-slip made of ticking, and Pete asked him if he expected to fill it.

"Oh, yes," answered Jim; "you just wait till you see the loads of nuts over there!" After a long walk they reached the place, and started in to work.

Squirrels scampered up and down the trees, jumping from one branch to another, and peering with bright eyes, as much as to say, "What are you doing here? This belongs to us." One little gray fellow, sitting erect and nibbling, caught Pete's eye, who said cheerfully, "There'll be lots left fer you to crack, so don't werry."

"Wouldn't it be queer to eat nuts all the time, and nothing else?" observed Brandt.

"Yes," replied Jim; "but I guess the squirrels like it, so long as they have enough.

"One time," continued the boy, "there were some nut trees near the orchard, and father had to cut them down for some reason. Well, do you know, Brandt, there were two or three little fellows without any dinner, and what do you suppose they did? They used to take the ripe pears and apples, and get at the seeds in them to eat. Then I got a pile of nuts and left them for the squirrels, and they did not touch the fruit again."

Just then a jolly, fat squirrel hit Jim on the nose with a nut, and the boys laughed.

"Per'aps that's one o' them squirrels what used to live near the orchard," said Pete, "an' 'e's been listening."

At last they all decided they had enough. Brandt had filled his basket, and Jim had the pillow-slip slung over his shoulder, about half filled.

It was almost dark when they came to Jim's house. The door was open, and a most savory odor greeted the boys' nostrils.

"I never felt so hungry in my life!" exclaimed Brandt, his cheeks glowing in the crisp, autumn air. "I wonder what I'm going to have for supper?"

"I know what *I'm* going to have," cried Jim, smacking his lips; "baked beans, and I just love them!"

"How I would like some!" replied Brandt, and just then Jim's mother appeared at the door.

"Mother, could Brandt have some of our baked beans?" asked Jim, depositing his bag of nuts on the doorstep.

"Of course he could," answered his mother; "he might stay to supper, if Mrs. Cole is willing."

"I'll run and ask her," said Brandt, hurrying with his basket to the house.

Permission was given to the happy lad, and when he had washed his face and hands, he appeared among his friends in the brown cottage to have supper with Jim.

And what an appetite a growing lad can possess! If I should tell you about the platefuls of melting baked beans, the thick slices of delicious brown bread, hot and but-

tered, the cups of sweet milk that disappeared, besides gingerbread and apple sauce, you would certainly be fearful lest a famine would occur at Sunnyside.

"Our friends from The Maples called this afternoon," said Brandt, at supper. "Mrs. Cole said they came to say good-by, as they go back to the city on Monday."

"Oh, those ponies!" exclaimed Jim. "When I grow up I'm going to have two just like them."

"Can I have one?" asked Tommy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HALLOWEEN.

BRANDT was going to have a party in the barn on Halloween. Pete and Jim, and even little Tommy, were helping to get things ready, and decorating in great style. Everything was made sweet and clean, and in one part of the barn chairs were placed for the visitors.

Bunches of wheat tied with bright-colored ribbons ornamented the sides of the barn, while ears of corn hung from the corners. The largest pumpkin that had been raised on the farm that summer stood on a barrel, a piece of cardboard over it, on which was written, "Don't squash me."

An immense head of cabbage was placed on another barrel, with the sign "Big Head" written over it, and other notices of similar nature caught the eye in different places.

At last the night arrived, clear and still, with the beauty of the harvest moon. Mrs. Cole had arranged goldènrod and asters in a very artistic manner, while Pete had lanterns hung around in safe places. The boys had flags flying from every point, and painted on a great white sign-board with red letters, were the words, "Hurrah for our brave soldiers!" All the help on the farm had been invited, and Sandy Macrae and his wife, who owned the adjoining farm.

In the middle of the barn floor stood a tub, half filled with water, and in it the boys were to duck for apples. What fun it was! Brandt ran to the tub first, ducked, but got no apple. Jim and Tommy tried, with no better success. The third time Brandt succeeded, and drew up in his teeth a large red apple.

The boys were getting along very nicely, and had caught several apples, when all at once Tommy, who thus far had not been able to get any, made a desperate plunge, and went head over heels into the tub. This caused a roar of laughter, and

Tommy had to be taken in charge by his mother, who said she would have "to hang him up to dry."

Another trick that was tried with a great deal of fun was this: some apples had been suspended from the rafters by long strings, just high enough to reach to the boys' lips.

"Now," said Pete, "stand back 'ere, take a run to the happles, an' see if you can get a bite."

The boys started, and ran to the apples that dangled from the strings, but they only succeeded in getting a knock on the nose.

After several attempts, Jim got the first bite, and finally succeeded in eating a good part of his apple. Other tricks were tried, with equal success, while mugs of sweet cider and cookies were passed about freely to everybody present. The next game in which everybody took part was the donkey trick. The time-worn picture of the donkey, minus his tail, was put up in a convenient spot, and each person in turn was blindfolded and given a tail to pin on in the right place. This created no end of merri-

ment. There were tails pinned over the donkey's ears, and on the end of his nose. Jim's father insisted in putting the tail on Tommy's shoulder, amid roars of laughter. But the greatest fun came when Sandy Macrae had his turn. Sandy stood up, tall and gawky, but Pete could not blindfold him till he got in a half-kneeling posture. Then he was turned around three times, and Sandy started out in the most cautious manner, in an exactly opposite direction from the donkey. He had extremely long arms and legs, and as he shuffled along, with the tail held out at arms' length, he made a very funny picture.

There was much giggling while Sandy made his careful movements; but when he pinned the tail on the big head of cabbage, everybody roared with laughter, and the applause was tremendous.

Jim put the tail about two inches from its right position, which was nearer than anybody else. When the prizes were given out, Jim received a handsome book from Brandt, which pleased him very much. The "booby" prize was the big pumpkin,

which Sandy accepted with a shrewd smile, saying, "It's nae so bard fer a dunkey."

When the floor was cleared, Tommy went among the visitors and distributed slips of paper. They were programmes, and read as follows: —

The evening's entertainment will close with a grand concert, in which the following artists will appear: —

1. Opening Chorus, "America," . . Everybody.
2. Declamation . . . . Master Brandt Carter.
3. Whistling Soloist . . . Master Jim Mullin.
4. Trumpet Solo . . . . Tommy Mullin.
5. Bicycle Tricks . . . . Brandt and Jim.

INTERMISSION.

6. Specialties . . . . Mr. Peter Watkins.
7. Closing Chorus, "Star-Spangled Banner," Everybody.

When everything was ready somebody started "America," and everybody joined in the stirring, patriotic strains.

When the last line was sung, Brandt stood in the centre of the barn and recited "Half a league," in a clear, boyish voice, which was received with much clapping. Next came Jim, who gave one of his whistling exhibitions, to the delight of his audience, bowed quickly, and took his seat.

Then Tommy arose and waddled to the middle of the floor with the trumpet under his arm. He suddenly grasped it in his little fat fists, blew one loud blast, and ran as fast as he could to Jim, amidst great laughter and applause. Number 5 on the programme was looked forward to with a great deal of interest, because it was the tandem tricks.

Jim mounted the tandem and rode around the great floor; at first slowly, and then very fast. Then he rode backward a few paces and stood on the back pedals. At this point Brandt got on the wheel, while Jim showed the audience how he could take a flying mount. Everybody was very much pleased, and praised their ability. So much of the programme had been practised beforehand, and the boys knew just what was coming; but they did not know that Pete was going to perform, until they saw his name on the paper. He had disappeared during the tandem tricks, and everybody was waiting to see what he was going to do.

All at once Pete appeared; his face blacked up like a negro minstrel.

He rolled his eyes at the boys and made strange faces at Tommy, who roared with delight. At last he opened his mouth to its utmost extremity and began: —

"De blue sky's smilin' ovah all,
De blossoms dey smell sweet.
Doan' frown 'cause I'se a truffle tired;
'Tain't me — it's ma feet.
You talk 'bout savin' stuff until
Dis chile is tired to death.
Why, doan' you know, when I doan' move,
I'se savin' of ma breath?

Chorus

I'se awfu' tired, 'Liza baby;
Dere are times dat I'm alive
An' busy as a bumble hive.
Are dose possum times? Well, maybe, baby.

"Look hyeah! doan' stan' dere a-wond'rin',
Ev'ry da'ky cannot shirk;
What yo' tink dat I don' marry
For da bettah or fo' work?
If yo' hab no recollection,
When I 'ferred on you ma name,
Missis Washington R. Johnson,
'Twas fo' da bettah, dat was plain.

Chorus

I'se tired, 'Liza — stop yo' sighin',
Dere are times dat I am spryah
Den an' ol' plantation fiah.
Dose are times of chickuns flyin' — my-un.

"An' you'll get a crown ob glory,
When yo' climb de golden stairs,
'Cause I'm such a 'dulgent husband,
An' don't meddle wi' yo' 'fairs.
All I ask is lots ob sunshine
An' ma dinnah nicely brown,
Tink ob dat, Eliza Johnson,
Yo' da luckiest gal in town.

Chorus

I'se awfu' tired, 'Liza honey,
Dere are times dat I am quicker
Dan yo' massa's pocket ticker.
Dose are times ob craps an' money — honey."

Pete gave his funny dance after each verse, to the delight of the boys, and when he had finished he disappeared. Then Mr. Peter Watkins returned with a pair of Indian clubs, which he swung very gracefully.

"What's comin' next?" asked Brandt, when Pete had finished his performance.

"I don't know," replied Jim; "it says, 'intermission.'"

"What's 'mission?" asked Tommy, eagerly.

"Wait, and we'll see," said his brother; and just then Nora and Mary went among

the guests with dishes of ice-cream and cake. In a short time everybody was served, and they all enjoyed the feast.

"I think 'mission ith the best of all," said Tommy, in a stage whisper, to his father.

After much talking and merrymaking, the party broke up. Before they left the barn they all stood and sang, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"How'd ye like, Sandy?" asked Mrs. Macrae of her husband, when they were on their way home in the moonlight.

"Vera weel," replied Sandy. "I kinder dozed off when the wee lad was gieing 'Half a leg,' and I didna wake till they came wi' the ice-cream."

CHAPTER XIX.

CATS.

"LET us go for the mail this afternoon," said Jim. "If Mrs. Cole is willing, we might go on the tandem."

"I'll run and ask her," replied Brandt; and he looked so sturdy and happy that Mrs. Cole thought it would do him no harm, and permission was given at once.

As the boys were riding toward the village they saw a peculiar-looking cat. It was chasing a butterfly across the road, and its great bushy tail stood on end as the tandem approached.

"What a queer-looking cat," said Jim; "but she's a beauty!"

"It's an Angora cat," answered Brandt. "We had one a long time ago; they are considered very fine cats."

The boys reached the village, and soon the cat was out of sight and forgotten.

When they arrived at the post-office they dismounted and went in to get the mail; but it was not quite ready, and as several people were waiting in line, the boys sauntered around and read the notices in the little country post-office. One of them told of a meeting in the Town Hall on a certain date, another gave the time the services were held in the different churches. Suddenly the boys caught sight of a prominent sign that read as follows: —

$10 REWARD.

LOST or STOLEN, an Angora cat, gray and white, stripe of black near the neck, three white paws. Whoever returns it to Miss Mehitable Reed, Maple Avenue will receive the above reward.

"It's the very cat we saw in the road!" exclaimed Jim.

"The very same," replied his companion. "Wouldn't it be jolly to find it and carry it home!" said Brandt, eagerly.

"Do you suppose she'd really give ten dollars for it?" asked Jim.

"Certainly," replied his companion; "it says so in the advertisement."

"It would be just great to find it!" cried Jim. "Let's look for it as soon as we get the letters." There happened to be two letters, and Brandt put them carefully inside his blouse pocket. In a few minutes the boys were on their way home, keeping a sharp lookout for the cat. They looked all over the field where they had seen the cat, and searched among the bushes, but the cat could not be found, and the boys returned home without a trace of it. The next morning they went over the same ground, and searched in new places, but all to no purpose; the beautiful cat had disappeared. They met several boys near the village who were hunting for the missing animal, and back of the hill they came upon Tiny Tibbetts on the same errand.

The boys turned homeward, and Jim exclaimed, "I bet somebody has found it and brought it back to the owner by this time!"

"Yes, I think so, too," replied Brandt, in a disappointed tone.

Jim had had hopes that he should find pussy and restore her to the arms of her

mistress. It must be told to the lad's credit that he would have searched just as diligently for the cat had there been no reward offered. He was an honest boy, with a manly spirit, and the fact that a pet animal was missing would be sufficient to make him do his best to find it. Jim loved animals, great and small, looking upon them as his friends; which is, and should be, the true basis of our regard for God's dumb creatures.

If you had asked Jim which he preferred, a dog or a cat, he would have answered without the slightest hesitation that he would rather have a dog, any time. Jim was very fond of dogs, but he did not despise cats, and it was with no little disappointment that he finally returned home without even a trace of the Angora.

The boys had about given up their search for Miss Reed's cat, when the very next morning, as they were walking in the road, pussy appeared before them, as if she had dropped from the skies. She ran toward them with a little plaintive meow.

"Come, pussy, pussy," said Jim, stooping

to catch her; but just as he put out his hand she scampered off. The boys gave chase, but she ran harder than ever, and made for a tall elm tree in the road.

"We've got her," cried Brandt; "you can climb after her."

As the two boys stood gazing at the tree, Tim came along, wagging his tail. Now Tim, be it known, was a well-brought-up dog, and had never been taught to show any aversion to his weaker brethren — the cat. But it was not in dog nature to see a cat up a tree and not object; consequently Tim set up a terrific barking as Jim started to climb the tree. All this frightened pussy, and she climbed higher and higher. At last Jim saw that it would be useless, as well as dangerous, to try to get her, so he climbed down.

"Tim frightened her," said Brandt, laughing merrily. He was too much of a boy not to have enjoyed the excitement, but was disappointed to think Jim couldn't get the cat.

"We'll have to take Tim home before we can do anything," said Jim; "and I'm

afraid," he continued, "if we leave here, we'll lose her again."

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Brandt, quickly: "I'll take Tim to Sandy Macrae's, it's quite near, and you stay here and watch."

"That's the very thing!" answered Jim; "and you might bring some food along to coax her."

When Brandt started off with Tim, Jim stretched on the grass under the tree where he could keep his eye on the Angora.

She was perched near a topmost branch, and no amount of coaxing on Jim's part would bring her down. Then he whistled like the birds, and squealed like the rats and mice, but kittie would not stir.

At last Brandt appeared with a small can and a saucer. Jim spied him quite a distance off, and Brandt waved the can in a circle without spilling a drop. When he came to the tree he placed the saucer where the cat could see it, and began to pour the milk.

Pussy watched the proceedings with much interest, giving little meows, and at

last began to climb down. But when she reached a branch right over the boys' heads, she refused to come any farther.

"Come, kittie, kittie, come, pussy," cried Brandt, while Jim held up the saucer to show her the milk.

"She's afraid," said Jim; "it's too bad Tim frightened her."

"Perhaps she'd come if one of us went away," said Brandt, "let's see if she will;" and he walked away and hid behind some bushes.

Jim sat down beside the saucer and coaxed the cat. He took the can and poured a little milk on the grass. Kittie meowed louder than ever to see the sweet milk wasted, and all at once she jumped down from the tree and started to lap the milk. Jim stroked the sleek back, and she purred with pleasure. The cat drank the milk as if she was very thirsty, and her handsome tail stood in the air. When she had just about finished, Jim caught her up gently in his arms, and Brandt emerged from the bushes.

They decided to return the cat in the

afternoon, so they carried her to the farm and put her in a room with some choice scraps for dinner.

When Pete harnessed Dandy and started for the post-office in the afternoon he carried the two boys and the cat with him.

He drove first to Maple Avenue, where he let down the boys, and then continued for the mail. The house in Maple Avenue was a large white mansion with a great many windows, the panes of which were small and shining. A trim garden adorned both sides of the path leading to the great black door with its bright brass knocker.

A tidy-looking maid appeared, in answer to Brandt's knock, and when she saw the cat in Jim's arms, exclaimed, "Poor Minkey, your mistress will be so glad!"

She showed the boys into a neat sitting room, and left them to call Miss Reed. Jim put the cat down, and she walked about the room, rubbing her face against the chairs, and purring her delight to be in such comfortable quarters once more.

In another minute the door opened, and in walked a tall, sweet-faced woman dressed

in black, a spotless muslin apron tied around her slim waist. Her brown hair was parted, and waved prettily over a shapely head. She smiled at the boys over her glasses, saying, in the cheeriest voice, "So you have found my cat. Well, I'm sure I'm very much obliged, and do tell me where you found her."

She seated herself in a cane rocker, and the cat immediately jumped into her mistress's lap and curled itself into a ball.

Jim had never met Miss Reed before, but he had heard of her. She was the wealthiest woman in the town. "She is peculiar, has notions, and gives herself airs," said the many who did not know. "A sweet woman, full of charity and goodness," said the few who did.

When Brandt had told her all about the cat, she appeared to be very much pleased, and asked him several questions about himself and Jim.

"So you are Jim," she said, smiling at the blushing lad. "I have heard of you, Jim. I think it was just about a year ago that a little episode with a bulldog came to my

ears. I'm glad to know you; you're a brave boy."

Jim blushed deeper than ever, and without further conversation, the good lady slipped out of the room. She returned with a tray, on which were two glasses of lemonade and a plate of currant cake. She set it before the boys, who were hungry (boys always are), and they enjoyed it very much.

There was a wholesome, homelike air, not only about the genial hostess, her house, and even her cat, but decidedly so about her cake and lemonade.

When the boys had finished the little lunch, she said, smiling, "And now for the reward; I think both of you deserve it, so I shall divide it between you. How will that do?"

"Very nicely, thank you," replied Jim, "I could not have caught it but for Brandt."

"Please, Miss Reed," said Brandt, quickly, in a manly, straightforward manner, "I could not take any part of the reward — I didn't do a thing but bring the milk, you know; it was Jim did it all."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the good lady, taking from her pocket a new crisp ten dollar bill. "I'll give it to Jim, and you can settle it between yourselves."

The boys thanked Miss Reed, and left the house feeling very happy.

Nothing could induce Brandt to take half the reward, and he finally succeeded in making Jim keep it.

Mrs. Cole said that Brandt had done perfectly right, and everybody was pleased because the honest lad had won it.

It was the first ten dollars that Jim had ever owned in his life, and he ran to give it to his mother. But that wise mother told Jim that she would put it in the bank as a nest-egg for her boy, hoping to add more to it by and by.

"Say, Jim, what did Miss Reed mean by referring to a bulldog episode?" asked Brandt that evening.

"Oh, that was nothing," answered Jim, lightly; and it was evident that he did not want to talk about it.

But Brandt's curiosity was aroused, and one day he asked Tiny Tibbetts about it.

As the boy did not know all the details, I will tell you.

About a year before this story opens, the village boys had taken great delight for a time in hunting cats.

One of the boys owned a bulldog which he had trained to chase a cat on sight. More than one harmless animal was found dead, and at last it got to be so bad that some of the villagers who loved their pets were afraid to let them out.

As Jim lived a good distance from the village, he had never witnessed any of the cruel sport; but one afternoon when he was going home from school he saw a group of lads hurrying for a field a short distance ahead.

Jim, always ready for some fun, and thinking there was going to be a game, ran to catch up to them; but when he reached the spot where they all stood, he looked in dumb amazement.

The owner of the bulldog was holding him in by the collar, while beside him another lad had under his arm a handsome maltese cat.

The poor thing had a wild, piteous look in her eyes, and struggled and scratched to get out of the boy's clutch. The bulldog tore and pulled to get at it, and the tormentors stood around enjoying the fun, waiting for the moment when the cat would be let loose, to be set upon and worried to death by the bulldog.

Every drop of blood in Jim's body was tingling with indignation, and he could hardly restrain from pitching in and whipping the cowards, right and left.

"Hello, Jim!" they shouted, as he came up; "just in time to see the fun."

"What," cried Jim, "you don't mean to say that you fellows are going to set that great bulldog on that poor cat!"

"Sure," answered the others. "It's lots of fun."

"Is it?" said Jim, quietly. "How would you like some one to hold you and then let loose a wild bull to torture you to death?"

"Pooh!" said the boy who held the dog. "Did you come here to preach?"

"No," replied Jim, quickly, "to act;" and he grasped the bulldog's collar with one

hand, and at the same instant gave the boy who held the struggling cat a blow on the shoulder that knocked him over. The boy fell backward on the grass, letting go his hold on the unfortunate animal who, thus released, ran for its life across the field and over the hedge toward the village.

Jim watched the cat until it was out of sight, and then let go his hold on the dog. It all happened in a minute, but the boys were too dumfounded to speak. Jim faced his schoolmates with flashing eyes, and said, "I don't stand by and see a helpless thing tortured."

Some of the boys present, who were more thoughtless than cruel, felt a little ashamed when they saw the contempt in Jim's face.

There was not one in the crowd that did not secretly admire him; but there is always a bully in a neighborhood, and the owner of the dog was one. He was boiling with rage, but being at heart a coward (a bully always is), he did not dare to act.

"Yer a coward, Jim Mullin! You struck Tony when he couldn't strike back," said he.

"I know I did," replied Jim, coolly, "there was no other way to do it; but his arms are free now, and so are yours."

The boys knew what he meant, but they did not offer to have any further trouble with our young hero. In a few minutes they separated, and the group was broken up. Jim started on his way, but not before two of the more manly lads said to him, "We shan't do it again; it's pretty mean sport."

It set some of the boys thinking, and they contrasted in their minds the owner of the bulldog and our friend Jim. They knew Jim was the bravest boy in school, and had to admit to themselves that what he did was all right. Without knowing it, they took him as a model.

They spoke of the episode at home, and it came to the ears of a good man in the village, who thought it serious enough to speak of to his congregation. He was an old-fashioned preacher, but what he said touched the hearts of his hearers. "If you think lightly of your boys indulging in cruelty to anything that has life, it will

help to make them heartless and indifferent to their fellow-creatures. Teach your children to be kind to dumb animals. This should be fostered in your growing boys as much as any other virtue. It is one of the things that will help make your boy a better man."

CHAPTER XX.

GOOD-BY TO THE FARM.

It was Saturday, just a week after the party on Halloween, when the boys were returning from a visit to Liberty Camp. They were hurrying across the fields to get home in time for dinner, when they saw two men approaching. Even in the distance the boys knew they were strangers, and wondered what they were doing at the farm. Suddenly Brandt let a yell of delight, and started to run like a colt. "It's my papa!" he shouted. "Papa, papa, I'm coming!"

The two men stopped, and one of them put out his arms, and in another minute Brandt was gathered in loving embrace, while Jim stood apart, looking shyly at the new arrivals.

Mr. Carter had given his little son a splendid surprise, coming to Sunnyside

Farm when Brandt thought he was far away across the ocean.

"Is this my boy?" said his father, holding him off, and looking with pleased surprise.

"Yes, papa dear, and I'm feeling splendid; I'm all better," he added.

"I guess you are," said Dr. Faire, who stood beside Mr. Carter and dangled his watch chain.

"This is my friend Jim," said Brandt, introducing his chum with boyish pride. Jim took off his cap and blushed, but Mr. Carter soon put the lad at his ease, and in a few minutes they were all talking pleasantly. Brandt had so much to tell that he didn't know where to begin, and his tongue never stopped until he sat down beside his father for dinner.

That was a very happy occasion, and everybody went about with glad faces. After dinner papa had to see all the treasures. First of all the bull's-eye on the side of the barn, and Mr. Carter and the doctor watched the boys shoot for a long time. Then they were taken to see the *Minne-*

haha, which Dr. Faire declared was a work of art. They did not have time to visit Liberty Camp, because the new arrivals had to see an exhibition on the tandem, and hear the story of its loss. It took all the next day (Sunday) to tell papa the different adventures, and even after that Brandt was constantly thinking of something new.

On Monday afternoon, while Jim was at school, Brandt went for a drive with his father, and as they passed the old schoolhouse in the road, Brandt said, "Wouldn't it be fine, papa, if there was a flag waving from it?"

"Yes, indeed!" was the answer. "That's a very good idea."

They drove through the village, and Brandt felt so proud, sitting beside his tall, handsome papa, that he would have liked to tell everybody they met. Several of the villagers recognized the lad from seeing him at the post-office, and they greeted him pleasantly. Miss Reed's stately old mansion was passed, and Brandt had to tell all about the cat episode.

On the way home Brandt was very thirsty, and they stopped at Sandy Macrae's, who had the finest spring in the state on his farm.

Sandy talked in his broad Scotch accent to Mr. Carter about his successful crops, and after a pleasant chat Brandt drove home.

That night, when Brandt was sleeping peacefully, his father and Dr. Faire were talking about him over their cigars.

"I'm really surprised in the improvement in such a short time," observed the doctor.

"So am I," said Mr. Carter; "this place agrees with him better than any we have ever tried."

"Yes," answered Dr. Faire, knocking the ashes from his cigar, "it's not the place that does it altogether, you know."

He talked in short, jerky sentences, with a very decided manner. "It's the life," he continued, "the fresh air and sunshine, and best of all, the companionship of a good healthy boy."

Dr. Faire had been studying Jim for a couple of days, and was thoroughly pleased with the shy, strong, practical lad.

"It's taken Brandt out of himself," he went on, "away from his books. He had too much of them."

"That is true," said Mr. Carter; "but Mrs. Cole tells me that he never cared for a boy as much as he does for this Jim of ours."

"Unlike kinds," laughed the doctor.

"I tell you," he observed in his brisk way, "one of the best things for a boy is another boy. If he be upright, honest in action, healthy in spirit, he will exert a greater influence for good among his companions than all the preaching in the world."

The next morning Dr. Faire went to his home in the city, and Mr. Carter had business that took him away from the farm all the morning.

Brandt was alone, and he busied himself until noon, when he rode down on the tandem to meet Jim coming from school.

Although it was early November, the weather was very mild, and the days thus far in the month had been warm.

"I think we are all going home next week," said Brandt.

"I don't know what I'll do when you're gone," returned Jim; "it will be terribly lonesome."

"Oh, we'll manage to see each other, I hope," replied Brandt.

Just then Mr. Carter appeared, and Brandt ran to meet him.

A few days after this conversation, if you had happened along the village road, you would have heard a chorus of voices that made the fields ring with patriotic strains.

Whence did it all come?

Walk over to the little schoolhouse and see the merry groups of children and villagers, old and young, standing outside, all watching one thing.

It looks as if some of our old friends had come back to Sunnyside for this occasion. Surely, there is Cousin Dick, tall and brown, standing beside a pretty golden-haired girl, who waves her hand every now and then.

Aunt Lee is sitting beside Pete in the carriage, surveying the scene through her

lorgnette, and Mrs. Cole's pleasant face is wreathed in smiles. Sandy Macrae and his wife are sitting in an old carryall behind Jim's father and mother, while fat little Tommy and Black Tim have a front seat.

And what is it that holds their attention so closely?

There's a new white flagpole over the old schoolhouse, and a boy with sturdy limbs and freckled face holds a string in his hand, waiting for a signal from a tall, handsome man. All at once he sees it, and up go the Stars and Stripes, fluttering in the breeze, and loud are the shouts and cheers that follow.

Then the tall, handsome man speaks to the children, and everything is still while he tells them a little about the history of their country and its flag. He speaks of their state and its great men, many of whom went to school in just such a schoolhouse. And he ends his remarks by saying that the flag is presented to their school "by my son Brandt."

Then there are more cheers, and Brandt goes over to Jim's side to take his hand.

Jim turns his face to hide the tears. But they are tears of joy that come from the great heart of the boy. Nobody sees them except Brandt and a sweet-faced woman with wavy brown hair who is standing near.

The rest of the afternoon is a holiday, and the children skip over the fields with light feet and glad hearts. And every now and then they stand afar off, to tell each other they can see their new flag waving from the schoolhouse. They whisper fair words of the giver, and each little heart is pulsing with a love and pride for country and the glorious flag of the Union.

There was merrymaking that night in the white farmhouse on the hill, and two little lads were going about, brimming over with happiness. What matter if one of them was going home on the following day to a busy city, away from his little friend in the country? The present glad hour is quite enough for them, and no shadow of the morrow can darken their pleasure.

Would that it might always be so! is the thought that comes to me as I see their

bright faces and hear their merry voices. And may such innocent, wholesome fun as brightened their summer come into the life of every lad in the wide world!